REVELATION *and* INSPIRATION
in the HOLY SCRIPTURES

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in the
Holy Scriptures

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Revelation and Inspiration in the Holy Scriptures

WHY THIS WRITING

THE purpose of this little book is not at all to prove the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. From the day when the Scriptures were written, men that have feared God—men of every rank, noblemen and peasants, laboring men and scholars, the ablest men in the world—have believed the Holy Scriptures to be, in very truth and reality, the word of God to men.

It is true also, on the other hand, that there are unbelievers. It was always so, is now, and always will be so. At the present time and in some quarters, unbelief is counted a token of learning. But this unbelief is not for lack of good evidence, but for lack of faith in spiritual realities. As said the Lord Jesus, "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

But there are many who believe and love the scriptures, who have not studied the manner and the measure of that inspiration which they fully believe. They have not considered the manner of the working of the Spirit of the Lord in the making of the Bible. For the help of these believers we undertake to examine a little the subject of revelation and inspiration, as they lie upon the face of the sacred writings.

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THE NEED OF REVELATION

The need of a divine revelation in religious concerns is so great that we may call it an utmost necessity. Without it there could be no true religion. What men can do in discovering truth in religious matters—what the ablest men and the most gifted nations can do—is shown by that which men have done without the Holy Scriptures. Men have done their best.

What kind of men were the Greeks? In architecture and art, in philosophy and poetry, they have been the teachers of the modern world. Modern magnificent buildings reproduce the proportions of structure and forms of ornament which were wrought out by Greek architects. To the Greek philosophies modern thought has added very little. The philosophy of this generation is thinking over the thought of Plato and Aristotle, of Zeno and Epicurus. Epicurus taught that pleasure is the supreme good and the universal motive in all human conduct. There are many Epicureans today, but they have added nothing to that which Epicurus taught.

The Greeks were men of genius. What did their genius accomplish in religion? The answer is found in the Greek mythology. What was this mythology? A strange mixture of fable, fancy and poetry, of wickedness, uncleanness and absurdity. Their gods had their generations,—their most ancient gods, Coelus and Terra (heaven and earth); their children, Kronos and Rhea (time and flow); Jupiter, Juno, Neptune and Pluto, children of the third generation; Jupiter, the supreme ruler of dry land and sky; Juno, the sister and wife of Jupiter; Neptune, the ruler of the sea; Pluto, the god of the underworld and of the dead; Mercury, the patron god of thieves; Bacchus,

worshipped by drunken revelry; Venus worshipped by lewdness. Was this a crude effort to personify the course of nature?

Another aspect of the Greek mythology is seen in their fancies concerning the dead. Charon, the ghostly ferryman, in his frail, creaking skiff takes the disembodied spirits across the dark river Acheron, into Hades. For this service he receives an obolos—one-fifth of a cent,—but if by any chance the body be left unburied—the least that was counted a burial was three handfuls of earth—the ghost must wander disconsolately along the banks of the river for a hundred years before it can be ferried across. These are the imaginings of the most gifted and the most cultured of the European races.

Consider also the religious thought of the meditative Orientals. They also are not lacking in natural gifts. The most widely spread system of religious speculation is Buddhism—the most widely held system of religious belief in the world. Buddhism was founded about five hundred years before Christ, and numbers five hundred millions of adherents. Buddhism is atheism, a religion without a god. The fundamental doctrine of Buddhism is that life is always and inherently an evil thing, always and everywhere an experience of pain and misery. The ultimate and supreme good is "nirvana," the extinction of conscious existence. The way of escape from the misery of existence into nirvana, is by an almost endless "transmigration of souls." The soul must pass from one body into another—into the bodies of other men, into the bodies of beasts or reptiles, into things—for millions of years, till by meditation, virtue and benevolence, the soul comes to complete deadness of desire, and enters into the longed-

for nirvana. The Buddha himself is said to have passed through five hundred and fifty transmigrations, in such forms as a hermit, a king, a slave, an ape, an elephant, a fish, a frog, a tree,—until at last by a life of meditation and asceticism, he attained the blessedness of non-existence.

We have here again the best that man can do in religious thinking;—a life of utter dissatisfaction; transmigration of souls in the bodies of men and beasts and things; the expiation of sins by millions of years of penal sufferings in some one of the many hells; and at last, as the only possible good, the escape from misery by the final loss of existence.

This is the best that man can do. The Greek and the Oriental have shown the limit of the unaided human understanding. And the modern mind does not surpass the ancient, for the modern unchristian philosophy is drifting toward Buddhism.

But some man may say, The names of the Greek deities and their histories, were intended for personifications of the elements of nature, the inventions of novelists, the fancies of poets, not to be taken seriously. If this be so, the Greeks were atheists, with no gods to whom serious worship was due—for they had no other gods than these. And why then did the Athenian court condemn Socrates, their noted philosopher, to drink hemlock, for neglecting the gods?

In respect to the ultimate mysteries of the material world, the scientist is hardly less helpless than the Greek and the Buddhist in their religion. Science has to do with matter and force, but science cannot tell the nature of either matter or force. Something called gravitation binds the universe together, and guides the worlds in their

mazy revolutions, but science has no explanation for that universal attraction. To escape the inconceivable mystery of creation, Philosophy has put forth the hypothesis of Pantheism, or of Dualism. The world has mysteries which the mind of man cannot explain, in nature and in religion alike.

What is the conclusion from these things? In the greatest matters of life—in the things which concern God, eternity and destiny—the world needs a divine revelation. If in the Holy Scriptures there be no such revelation, men must grope forever in darkness.

REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

Upon the open face of Holy Scripture we see both revelation and inspiration, sometimes working together and sometimes separate. Inspiration is that special influence of the Holy Spirit by which the Bible writers were taught what to write and how to write, so that their writing should be in reality the word of God to men. A revelation may be made by inspiration, or in many other ways. To illustrate this at this time would anticipate that which we shall notice many times as we go on with this study.

THE PRIMAL REVELATION

The great purpose of philosophy is to give account of the origin, or the becoming, of the universe. The beginning of things was, of necessity, before man's knowledge. Some have tried to write a history of the creation out of their own grotesque imagination; some have explained the creation as a philosophic speculation; and others have tried

to trace the course of cause and effect backward to the beginning. The Babylonian myth may illustrate the first; Pantheism is an example of the second; and Geology undertakes to trace backward the course of natural causation. But the first chapter of Holy Scripture writes the origin of the universe as simple history. The creation and making of the world by steps and processes which required untold ages is condensed into one page of a small book. So little is said—so much is left unsaid—so long periods are skipped, that these touches of history are not always easy to understand or to bring into harmony. This account of the creation is not imagination; it is not speculation; it is not tradition; it is history. And if it be real history it is inspired history. The creation itself is the great primal revelation, the basic revelation, the fundamental revelation of God. And this inspired history is the inspired record of that first revelation. To whom was this inspired history first given? Was it given to Moses? or was it given to Adam, or to one of the patriarchs who sent it on its way down through the generations along the pathway of tradition. The Scriptures do not tell. If the creation history was given first to Moses, how was it given? Was it by a spoken voice from heaven? Was it by an angel sent from heaven? Or was it by an unspoken communication by the Spirit of God to the spirit of the prophet? We count it a revelation to Moses by the Spirit of inspiration. We have here an account of the beginning of the world, not as a guess, not as a speculation, not as an inference, but as history, on the authority of God himself.

THE CONTENT OF THE PRIMAL REVELATION

This first revelation was very much more than a short chapter in early history. It does more than declare the origin of this material world. It begins the revelation of God. The creation history is fundamentally important because it is a revelation of the Creator.

What revelation does the creation make of God? *God is one, and he alone is God.* There is no second God to compete for the worship and service of men. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." There is no place in the universe for another Creator.

Spectroscopic analysis of light shows that some of the chemical elements which constitute this earth, are found also in the sun and in the stars. The light which comes from distances too great for imagination to conceive, is the same light which illuminates this terrestrial planet. The same force of gravitation binds the entire universe into one system. One plan of construction through the entire system is the token that the Creator was one.

The creation reveals in the Creator all of power which the mind of man can conceive, and more,—and every kind of power. And the properties with which matter and molecules are endowed, and the complex operations by which the flux and life of the world are maintained show a wisdom which turns the wisdom of man into foolishness. The wonderful discoveries of science are the finding out—so as to use—of a few of the operations of the Creator. Science originates nothing; it only discovers some of God's methods of working.

This treatise is not teaching science; it merely calls attention to this primal revelation,—that the creation of

the heavens and the earth revealed the existence and some of the attributes of the one Creator; and the history of this creation was revealed and put on record by the Spirit of inspiration.

THE CREATION OF MAN A FURTHER REVELATION

The origin of the human race has been a question of curious interest and speculation from time unknown. At the present time the much approved—and the much despised—hypothesis is that by slow changes through limitless ages man has developed from the brutes. The Holy Scriptures give an account of the origin of man, not as a supposition, but as history. This history is short and simple, and it is inspired, or it is nothing. When the earth was fit and ready for man, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." "So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him." In the second chapter of Genesis this history is given a little more in detail". The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul." This is a great advance over the revelation made by the creation of *things*. In the former creation God showed his works and workmanship; in the creation of man he gave a shadow picture of himself. This likeness of the Creator has been sadly marred by sin, so that often it seems more like the image of a demon, and every human soul has been so touched by evil that it needs to be created anew. But in Christ, the second Adam, we see what man was in his sinlessness. In him, in Christ, was seen the picture revelation of the Creator,—as Jesus himself said, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." What was this likeness

of the Creator? A being not all dust, but a spiritual being; a being endowed with the mysterious power of moral choice; with reason to understand the thought of the Creator; with conscience to distinguish right and wrong, good and evil; and with a moral nature which might represent the Creator in righteousness and holiness.

This is the first illustration of God's method of revelation,—by creation, the creation of things and the creation of a spiritual being in his own likeness, and then by the history of that creation given by the Spirit of inspiration.

THE REVELATION OF LAW

The second great revelation was the announcement of law, especially the law of testing. Without law the likeness of God in man would be only a possibility; without law there is no action of conscience; without law conscience is an eye without light. Without law there may be sinlessness as a brute or a tree is sinless, but there cannot be righteousness. Without law there cannot be moral choices. Therefore God gave his law in order that his likeness might be developed in man. The record of this second revelation is brief, like the record of the former. Among the trees in Eden were two that were not meant for food—the tree of life and the tree of testing, the tree "of the knowledge of good and evil." The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." How was this command given? The record does not tell, but the brief history leads us to suppose that it was given by spoken words. The conscience of Adam recognized the authority

of his Creator, and felt the obligation to obey; but under the influence of the tempter he disobeyed this testing commandment.

The supplement of this transaction is instructive. After their sin our first parents heard the Lord walking in the garden, as the sun was setting, and hid themselves among the trees. The Lord called them forth and they acknowledged their transgression. Their hiding showed the secondary action of conscience—the sense of guilt, condemnation and shame. Then God pronounced upon them the "death" of which he had forewarned them,—"In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." THE DIVINE CONDEMNATION IS DEATH. (John 5-24) Little by little they learned the deep and terrible meaning and consequences of that death; the sense of their Creator's deep displeasure; wearisome toil for bread; the subjection of the woman with added pain and suffering; and finally the dissolution of the body,—"The dust returning to the earth as it was, and the spirit returning to God who gave it." This was God's expression of his exceeding displeasure toward sin. How was this revelation of displeasure made? First, by spoken words—by the warning beforehand and by the sentence pronounced afterwards. Then followed the long continued automatic working out of penalty.

The automatic punishment of sin, punishment by the regular course of nature, is a most impressive expression of the Creator's holiness. God hates all manner of sin and uncleanness, and he has woven that hatred into the fabric of nature. He has graven it upon atoms and molecules. The atoms see with the eyes of God. The sinner can no more escape the penalties administered by nature, than he can hide from the retributions of eternity. A world

which automatically distributes blessings to the good and miseries to the bad, does surely show the character of the Creator. Statutes written upon parchment may lapse and pass away, but God's holiness written upon the constitution of the heavens and the earth changes not.

Is this natural manifestation of holiness and penalty recognized in Scripture? To Adam the Lord said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." "Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." (Gen. 3:17, 18.) "The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the law, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore the curse hath devoured the earth." (Isa. 24:5, 6.) "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of his flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. 6:7, 8.)

THE MYSTERIOUS PROMISE AND HOPE

The victory of the tempter, the primal transgression, the penalty pronounced as if it were final, and the expulsion from Paradise, might well bring to our first parents the dispair of all hope. But with the penalty pronounced upon each offender Jehovah began the revelation of that plan of salvation which has expanded through the ages and will continue to grow till the end of the world. The race of Adam was not to be blotted out, but there would be enmity between the seed of the woman and the brood of the tempter. In this endless conflict the tempter would bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, but in the end the seed of the woman would break the tempter's head. The Seed of the woman—not of the man—can be none

other than Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary, and the promise for us is plain, but for the time it was a mysterious hope. When Cain was born Eve was full of hope; she said (the probable translation) "I have gotten the man, the coming one." But Eve soon learned her disappointment. When the fullness of time had come Gabriel came to Mary of Nazareth and announced that she should be the mother of the promised Seed for which the ages were waiting. To Adam and Eve this promise was an unexplained mystery, and to many generations after, but it was a promise which never lost its power of hope,—and the Son of Mary is still the hoped-for Coming One, and when he shall come again he will bruise the serpent's head.

How was this promise given in Eden? Not by inspiration, but by the same vocal speech by which the law was given and the penalty was declared.

THE BEGINNING OF SIN-OFFERING

The inspired account of the beginning of sin-offerings is short and leaves some things unexplained. "Abel was a keeper of sheep and Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering, he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth." The outcome of Cain's anger was that he quarreled with Abel and slew him.

In the epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 11:4) we find this additional item touching Abel and his offering,—"By

faith Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts."

How came the first generation of men to understand the will of God, that as sinners they should come to him bringing sin-offerings, the firstlings of the flock? There is no instinct in human nature that could teach men that without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin. There is no record of a revelation concerning this great matter, But the account of Abel's accepted sin-offering and of Cain's rejected fruit offering, shows plainly that such a revelation had been given.

How came it to pass that no record was made of that first instruction concerning atonement for sin? There was no need of such a record. The book of Genesis was written for men who understood the patriarchal sin-offerings —men who had been instructed in all the details of offerings for sin. They knew the difference between a sin-offering and a thank-offering. When they read that Abel brought an offering of the firstlings of his flock, they knew the origin and the meaning of that offering. They understood why the fruit offering of Cain was not acceptable. A sinner must come to God as a sinner—as a penitent sinner—otherwise there is no acceptance. The men for whom Moses wrote had the patriarchal history behind them, and the blood of the passover lamb, and the sin-offerings of the tabernacle in their own experience; they could not miss the meaning of the first sin-offering.

A SECTION OF INSPIRED HISTORY

From the creation to the call of Abraham the Holy Scriptures give a brief, a very brief, outline of history.

The names and ages of the long-lived men before the flood, the separation between the descendents of the godly Seth and of Cain, the increasing impiety and corruption of men, and the near extinction of the race by the Flood, a period, according to the common reckoning, of a little less than seventeen hundred years, are recorded in a few small pages. From what sources came this history? A certain amount of history is handed down from generation to generation by tradition. But if any one will see how uncertain and grotesque tradition may become let him read the Assyrian and Babylonian creation traditions. The clear, simple outline of history given in the Scriptures could never have come from tradition. Some history is derived from records, more or less trustworthy, made on material more or less durable. If records were made from Adam to Noah they are not now known. This early history must needs have been inspired history. This becomes more evident when we consider some incidents of that history. At three hundred and sixty-five years of age "Enoch was not, for God took him." When Enoch disappeared from among men how was it known that God had taken him? If we deny the inspiration of the history, we must deny the reality of the incident. The translation was more than a historic incident,—it was a revelation of the reality of the unseen world and of the life to come. If God did not reveal to Noah the coming of the Flood, how should he spend years and years in preparing to meet the coming disaster? And how could it be known that the Flood was a divine retribution for the universal ungodliness? This history is either inspired or unhistoric.

Another aspect of this history ought to be noted. Those long lives before the Flood, while the new earth was being

explored and subdued—must have abounded in incident and adventure. The selection of that which should be written, and that which should be left unwritten, must have been made by the Spirit of inspiration. The divine purpose seems not to have been at all to give fullness of history, but rather to link the beginnings of things with the fuller revealing of the great salvation, to be made in later times. The Spirit selected to be written a very few things out of the abundance which the writers already knew.

SYMBOLIC HISTORY

Not symbolic historic records, but symbolic historic events. To Adam and Eve God spoke in an audible voice. To many others he spoke by communicating to them inwardly unspoken thought and knowledge, along with the assurance that it was a divine communication. Another wonderful method of revelation was symbolic history. The history of the chosen people from the call of Abraham to their peaceful settlement in the land of promise, is a picture of the individual Christian life, a silent drama, as it were, extending through the centuries, a "Pilgrim's Progress," written not in dream-pictures, but in actual life. In the epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 11:8 and fol.) Abraham is represented as a sojourner in a land not his own, living in tents with no settled dwelling place, journeying to and fro as God should direct, living a life of faith, waiting for the fulfillment of the divine promises, his eye fixed upon a heavenly inheritance, "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Abraham was called to leave his native country and his idolatrous kindred, to enter upon a new life among a people with whom he should never mingle, but should count himself forever a stranger. He was to have no solid

dwelling, but was to be always loose-footed, so as to be always ready to go as the Lord should lead. So does the Lord call his people, now and always, every one, to come out from the former evil associations of this evil world, to look not at the things which are seen, but at the things not seen, to count their citizenship as in Heaven, to count themselves as pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land, pilgrims journeying to a heavenly home.

Not trusting in the care of God, Abraham left the land of promise, which he was to pre-empt for his posterity by dwelling in it as a stranger, and went down into Egypt. This increased his riches but brought him trouble and dishonor. The same fortune has been seen in many a Christian life. Lot started with Abraham and might have been a sharer of God's promises, but when the opportunity came for a settled dwelling, he built his house in Sodom, became a citizen there and one of the city fathers, and sat in the gate.

So Abraham became by the purpose of God, for all generations and for all the world, the representative of a life of faith. By this object lesson God showed the world what a life of faith is like.

THE SYMBOL OF BONDAGE IN SIN

Having given a historic object lesson of the life of faith, God proceeded to give, more in detail, pictures of the steps by which the salvation of the sinner is accomplished. First he gave a symbolic picture of the sinner in his sin.

In the lifetime of Jacob his entire family moved down into Egypt—the place of Abraham's dishonor—not to make a brief visit to Joseph, but for unlimited residence.

There by a change in the dynasty of the ruling pharaohs, in the place of a government that protected them, a government arose that counted them foreigners and possible enemies. This unfriendly government reduced them to bondage, made them slaves of the crown. This servitude was severe and they groaned under their burdens. This servile life had its natural effect, they became servile in spirit, and they lost the will to attempt to deliver themselves. They accepted their bondage as the best life possible for them. When Moses began to work for their deliverance they reproached him as a disturber of their plodding life, and begged to be let alone.

The symbolism is plain. The Lord Jesus says, "Whosoever lives in sin is the servant of sin." The sinner cannot save himself; he has no mind to save himself; he must have the same Savior that delivered the Hebrews from their Egyptian bondage. The sinner left to himself is commonly contented in his life of sin. He often resists and resents any effort to disturb him in his contentment. He is sinfully servile in his sinning, and not till a new heart is given him does he have the will to assert his freedom. The first great work which the Lord did for the Hebrews was to deliver them from their servitude. Again and again, many times over, in their after history, did the Lord say to them, I am he that brought you up out of Egypt. The saved sinner will not forget that the Lord is he that saved him from servitude and condemnation under sin.

In the deliverance of the Hebrews Jehovah showed himself mighty over all the demon gods of Egypt. In the conversion and saving of the sinner the Lord Jesus shows himself mighty to put down the idol gods which sinners

worship,—the god of riches, the god of lust, the god of pleasure, the love of power, selfwill, the love of all evil things. "Twice-born men" are the miracles of the Christian ages.

THE PASSOVER LAMB

What had the passover lamb to do with this symbolism of salvation? What had the blood spattered upon the doorposts of the Hebrews to do with bringing them out of Egypt? To understand the meaning of the passover lamb and the sprinkled blood, we harken back to the sin-offerings of Abel and the altars and offerings of the patriarchs. The bondage in sin is a double bondage, bondage to a depraved nature and a sinful life, and the bondage of condemnation under God's holy law. The Lord said to Moses, "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon the throne even to the first-born of the maid servant that is behind the mill,"—this is the word of universal condemnation, for if the Hebrews had unbelievingly neglected to sprinkle the blood, they also would have been under the universal curse. The sinner must first be delivered from the condemnation, otherwise he cannot be delivered from the bondage of a depraved nature and an evil life. The guilt of sin must be forgiven, or the power of sin cannot be broken. So the atonement made by the blood of the passover lamb, prepared the way for the march out of Egypt—out of servitude into liberty.

PASSING THROUGH THE RED SEA

They started to make haste out of Egypt, and Pharaoh's army pursued. The Hebrews found themselves shut in between the hills and the sea with the cavalry and chariots of Pharaoh rushing on behind. They were terrified and wished that they had been left undisturbed in their servitude. Then the Lord came for their deliverance, opened the sea before them, led them through the sea by a light-giving cloud which gave them light all the night, and defended them by a cloud of darkness behind. Then they sung a song of triumph, for they were beyond the jurisdiction of Pharaoh. He no longer had any authority over them. In the "No Man's Land" into which they had come Jehovah was their only Lord. God was their king, and Moses, his servant, their leader.

What was the symbolism of this passing through the sea and out of the old bondage, and out of the old jurisdiction? It means the new birth, by which the power of the depraved, sinful nature is broken, and the good profession by which the sinful life of the past is renounced and a new allegiance to Christ is assumed. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." They were in form entering into the new kingdom. And Paul says "All our fathers were under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Moses was their leader, standing for Christ. The people went up out of Egypt "harnessed," in soldierly order, but they did not deliver themselves; their deliverance was "not by might nor by power" of men; Jehovah opened the way through the sea, and gave them light. The people understood this and sang Jehovah's praises. So the sinner is saved by a divine de-

liverance,—born anew "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This new birth stands between the saved sinner and any return to the old jurisdiction of sin. He cannot go back, because he is "born of God."

THE LAW OF THE LORD

A short journey after passing through the sea, brought the Hebrew tribes to Sinai, and then soon came the giving of the law. The people found themselves placed under a law stricter, and with penalties severer, than any ever laid down by Egyptian taskmasters.

Here we must notice the method of the giving of this law under which the Hebrews came,—not by inward suggestion to Mōses; not by wisdom imparted to Moses to establish wise regulations. The giving of the law was a manifestation of God himself, as well as a revelation of his commandments. The great congregation—not merely some heads of the tribes—were gathered in the broad valley before Sinai. The summit of the mountain was wrapped in thick clouds. The mountain smoked as a mighty furnace. The great granite mountain trembled. Out of the thick blackness came thunders and flashing lightning. Then in a voice of thunder so that all the congregation might hear, God proclaimed his commandments. There was no place for a suspicion that Moses was staging a law of his own devising. And no one who saw and heard that giving of the law could ever doubt the real existence of the unseen Jehovah. A revelation by a living voice—in a voice of thunder, from the midst of cloud and smoke and thunder and flashing lightning, while the granite mountain was all of a tremble,—it is no won-

der that the people were afraid and drew off from the mountain. And that the words of thunder might not be forgotten, or ever questioned, God gave to Moses the same words graven on tablets of stone.

This was the method and manner of the giving of that law which the world now knows as the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments. No other law or revelation was ever given in a way like this. Under this law the tribes of Israel came in place of their former bondage. And under this law they came by a free and voluntary covenant, pledging themselves to loyalty and obedience toward Jehovah.

What is the meaning of this transaction in its Christian symbolism? Salvation can never be won by obedience to the law; "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified," for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." And again Paul says, "We are not under law, but under grace." Yet the law remains, not weakened but strengthened. The law is the pattern of righteousness, the expression of God's will and holiness. In Christian experience the slavery of a sinful life gives place to a loving loyalty to God's law, and to aspiration for inward holiness.

THE WILDERNESS LIFE

The wilderness life—the long wandering in the barren lands between Egypt and the land of promise—represents a mixed two-fold experience,—on the one side, a divine training in faith toward God and obedience; on the other side, failure following failure because of unbelief, a life that was lived "at a poor dying rate." By reason of unbelief the great majority of the people that came out of Egypt never saw the good land to which the Lord was

bringing them. From the sea they journeyed three days into the desert land and found no water, or only bitter water which they could not drink. Then they began to murmur against Moses. What was the divine meaning of this famine of water? Did the Lord mean that they should perish of thirst or even suffer for lack of this necessity of life? Not that at all; nor yet that they should worry and murmur and complain. He was waiting to supply their need in response to their trust in him.

By the middle of the second month of their journeying, the supply of food which they brought with them, was exhausted, and again they murmured against Moses and Aaron. They reproached them with having brought the people out into the wilderness to kill the whole multitude with hunger. Was it the Lord's purpose that the people should suffer and perish from hunger? Surely not, but that they should learn to look to him for bread. It was an object lesson in the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." Then he began to send their daily supply of manna.

As the people journeyed on, they came to Rephidim, and there again they found no water, and again they murmured and reproached Moses for bringing them out of Egypt. There the Lord commanded Moses to take his rod—the rod which he had stretched out over the sea—and to smite the rock, in the presence of the people, and water came out abundantly. It was a lesson that God could give his people water from the utmost dryness. And yet again in Kadesh the people found themselves without water, and the Lord gave them water out of the rock. They were slow to learn the lesson of faith in God for the supply of their needs,—and so are we. The Lord

Jesus said, "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things," and Paul wrote, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

DISCIPLINE AND PENALTY IN THE WILDERNESS

In the symbolic wilderness-life something more is found than encouragement to trust in God for bodily wants. In their Egyptian life the Hebrews had been surrounded by an atmosphere of idolatry. The reverent obedience of love, which belongs to the service of Jehovah, was wholly lacking. They come now under discipline to train them for a life of obedience. They were called upon to recognize the supreme authority of Jehovah. Law became their "school-master." One element in this training was penalty,—a training by penalties so severe that we stand in awe of the divine wrath. Paul says, "knowing the *terror of the Lord,* we persuade men."

While yet—it might almost be said, while yet the law of God from Sinai was still sounding in their ears, "Thou shalt not make any graven image to worship it," they made the golden calf—the likeness of the sacred bull of Egypt. They said, "This is the god that brought us up out of Egypt," and fell down and worshipped it. The Lord took instant notice of this great and presumptous transgression. When Moses, coming down from Sinai at God's command, saw how hilarious were the people in their idolatry, he threw down the tablets of the law and broke them, declaring in this way that the covenant which the people had so lately made with the Lord, was broken. Then the terrible penalty swiftly followed,——the sword of the

Levites, as they went back and forth, to and fro, through the camp cut down whomsoever they met. And the Lord commanded to remove the Tabernacle—the symbol of his presence—and to set it up outside the camp, away from the near presence of the people. Nevertheless at the supplication of Moses the Lord forgave this sin, and continued them as his people. But in his after dealing with the people the Lord remembered this great transgression.

Why this swift and terrible penalty for this riotous idolatry? One great purpose of penalty is that it may stand as a deterrent against further like transgressions. The people did not repeat this sin. Another purpose of penalty is to show the greatness of the sin; penalty is the measure of the sin. A slight penalty is the token of a small sin. Penalty is an expression and a revelation of the divine holiness. God's hatred of sin must needs be expressed no less than his goodness and mercy. This is the meaning and the necessity of atonement.

This discipline by penalty was repeated many times. The two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, presumptuously offered incense with unlawful fire, and they perished instantly by fire from the Lord. Korah, Dathan and Abiram rebelled against the Lord's appointment of Aaron, and undertook to put themselves violently into the priesthood, and they and their adherents were engulfed by the earth, or perished by fire. The mixed multitude that came up out of Egypt and the whole congregation complained bitterly of the food which the Lord was providing; they despised the manna and hankered after flesh to eat. The Lord responded to this complaining, and said, I will give you flesh to eat, and a plenty. He sent quails in a boundless flock, flying low, and the people beat them down as the birds flew by, a day and a night and a day, and then they

gorged themselves with the flesh;—and straightway a great plague broke out among them and many died of the plague.

These are illustrations of the discipline by penalty which the Lord gave the people in their wilderness life, to train them to obedience. But through all the forty years they were slow to learn. This is the discipline for backsliders and false professors.

VICTORY BY FAITH

Faith is the root and spring of all spiritual life. The Hebrews received their bread and their water as gifts direct from God, and they were trained to trust in him for all things. But bread and water were not the sum of their needs. Enemies withstood them in their journeying, and they must win the victory over these enemies before they could enter the land of promise. These victories were won through faith, and these victories were symbolic of spiritual victories. The great truth pictured in the victories of this wilderness life is that spiritual victories are won, not by struggle and strain and will-power, but by believing, by trusting,—by ceasing from struggle and strain.

Before the people came to Sinai, while they waited a little while at Rephidim, an army of Amalekites came to resist their advance. Moses said to the young man, Joshua, choose men and go out and fight the Amalekites. With the rod of God in my hand, I, along with Aaron and Hur, will go up to the top of the hill and pray. "And it came to pass that when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed." But the fight was long, and Moses became weary and his hands sank down; then Aaron and Hur, on either side, held up his hands until the sun went down,—and so

by faith and prayer Joshua won the victory and put the Amalekites to flight. This is the first great lesson that victory comes not by sword and spear, but by faith and prayer; that spiritual victories are won not by might and power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. This lesson becomes clearer at the end of this wilderness history than at the beginning.

THE FINAL TRIAL OF THEIR FAITH

The people marched on toward the promised land. They came to Kadesh Barnea, so near the border of Canaan that nothing seemed to remain except to enter in and take possession. Moses said to them, the land which the Lord has promised is before you; go in and possess it; be not afraid. The people proposed that men be sent first to explore the land and to search out the best route for entering the country. The Lord approved this plan, and Moses appointed twelve men, a man from each tribe. These explorers went through the land; they took special note of the fruitfulness of the country, and returned and made their report. They all agreed that the land was a good land, "flowing with milk and honey," and they brought a sample of the wonderful fruit. But, they said, the country has great cities walled to heaven, and we saw there the giants, the sons of Anak, and "we were in our sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." Two of the twelve, Caleb and Joshua said, that which these men say is true, but the land is an exceedingly good land, and the Lord will help us, and with his help we can easily take possession. With Jehovah helping their mighty men will be "bread for us." But the people were persuaded by the ten men who brought the bad report. As they had done many a time before, they broke out into clam-

orous weeping; they said, we shall all be slaughtered and our wives and children will be made captives and slaves. Some of them proposed to choose another leader in place of Moses and march back into Egypt. When Caleb and Joshua exhorted them to trust in the Lord and be brave, the people threatened to stone them. Then the Lord gave them this final word,—You have had your opportunity and have made your choice. You say that you have been brought out of Egypt that you all might perish, and that your wives and children might become a prey to the Canaanites. It shall be as you say; you shall wander in this wilderness till all this generation of men has wasted away, but your children shall go in and possess the good land. When the people heard this word, they mourned greatly, but as with Esau, they found no place for repentance. But they did not accept this word of the Lord as final. On the morrow, in rebellion against God's decree and in defiance of the protest and warning of Moses, they marched out to fight the Canaanites. And they were driven back and utterly routed. Then the Lord turned their march away from the land of promise, and set their faces toward the desert wilderness, and that wilderness life went on through the slow years till all that generation of men had passed away.

There must needs come the time in every unbelieving life when the final choice is made and when the last word is spoken.

THE SIN OF MOSES

The Holy Scriptures declare that God is not "a respecter of persons," and this is impressively revealed in the wilderness life of the Hebrew tribes. Whether it was

an unknown man whose name was never written, or the "head" of a tribe, or Aaron and his sons, or Miriam, the sister of Moses, or Moses himself, when they sinned, their sin met with the same quick condemnation. The people came into the desert of Zin, and there was no water there. From their previous experience they surely might have trusted that God would provide. But instead of calmly trusting, they complained against Moses more bitterly than ever before. They charged that he had not fulfilled his promises; that he had promised them a fruitful land abounding in figs and vines and pomegranates, but had brought them into a desert to perish of thirst. The Lord said to Moses, Take your rod and call the people together, along with Aaron, and in their presence *speak* to the rock, and it shall give forth water for the people and the cattle. The continual complaining of the people had wearied Moses and fretted him, and their unjust accusing angered him. In this fretted mood he spoke to the people as if he himself must bring water out of the rock; "Hear now, ye rebels, must *we* fetch you water out of this rock"? and then instead of *speaking* in the name of Johovah, he smote the rock twice with his rod. Water flowed out from the rock, for God would not discredit Moses in the presence of the people; but he said to Moses and Aaron "Because ye believed me not to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." Many years afterward, when the people were ready to cross the Jordan into Canaan, Moses besought the Lord, saying, "O Lord God, I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan"; but the Lord would not change the sentence pronounced long before. He said to Moses, "Let it suffice thee; speak no more

unto me of this matter." Aaron had already died in the wilderness. So it was, though this offence was by the High Priest, and by the leader of the people, the greatest prophet of all the ages and God's own representative, God visited their sin upon them, and showed that he was not a respecter of persons.

THE REVELATION MADE BY THE TABERNACLE

If there be any one element in this long historic and symbolic drama which is most important it is doubtless the "Tabernacle of Meeting," the place where the Lord met the people. This tabernacle, or tent, was, first, an enclosure made by posts and curtains, the enclosure about one hundred and fifty feet in length, and seventy-five feet in width. Within this enclosure was the tabernacle proper, the real tabernacle, forty-five feet long, fifteen wide, and fifteen feet in height. This was covered above with a double covering of prepared skins. This was placed in the back half of the enclosure. This tabernacle itself was divided by a curtain into two rooms; the first fifteen by thirty feet; the second fifteen feet square. The first was called the holy place; the second was the most holy place, or the Holy of Holies. Within the enclosure, between the entrance and the tabernacle was, first, the great altar of burnt sacrifice, and then the brazen laver, a great brazen vessel containing water for washing by the priests in preparation for their service of worship. Entering the holy place, on the left hand side was the golden candle stick with its seven burners; on the right hand was the table for the show bread; and in front, next the most holy place, was the altar of incense. Within the Holy of Holies was the ark of the covenant—a golden chest which contained

the two tablets of the law which God gave to Moses, a pot of manna kept for a memorial, and Aaron's rod which budded. The golden cover of this ark was called the "Mercy Seat," and over this mercy seat two golden cherubim stretched their wings.

What was the meaning of this tabernacle with its furnishing and its service? It was a pictured revelation, to the people and to all the ages, of the way of salvation—the way sinners must come to God. When a man entered the enclosure of the tabernacle there met him first the great altar of burnt sacrifice. On this altar, every morning and every evening, a lamb was offered to make atonement for sin. When the first offering was made on this altar, "fire from the Lord" kindled the wood. This sacred fire was kept burning day and night from year to year; it was never suffered to go out. Atonement for sin was made continually without end. This said to every one that came, that, without atonement for sin, there is no access to God and no acceptable worship. Till satisfaction is made for the guilt of sin, and the condemnation is taken away, there can be no salvation; nothing can be done for the sinner so long as he is under condemnation. The sinner must come to God confessing his sin and accepting the atonement made by the "Lamb of God."

Passing the altar of atonement the worshiper came to the brazen laver. There the priest cleansed his hands and his feet before beginning the services of the sanctuary. This represented the new birth and the cleansing of the sinner for whom the atonement had been made—"born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Till the sinner is born again, washed with the washing of regeneration, he is not fitted

to render any service to God. The new birth and the cleansing by the Spirit is the second great element of salvation.

When the worshiper, justified and cleansed, entered the holy place there was on the one side the golden lamp with its seven burners. This represents illumination by the Spirit of God. Light is the symbol of the divine Spirit, and seven is the number representing divine perfection. On the other side was the table on which the loaves of "show bread" were laid, representing the divine support and nourishment of the spiritual life. Before the worshiper in this, the holy place, on the side next to the Holy of Holies, was the altar of incense. Here the priest burned the precious incense, a sweet-smelling perfume, before the Lord. Justified, and washed, enlightened and nourished, the believer comes to God with the incense of worship, the incense of reverence, praise and thanksgiving. Into the holy place of the tabernacle the priests only were permitted to enter, but in Christ every believer is made a priest to come to God with the incense of worship. Every consecrated believer enters the holy place and dwells there.

The "Holy of Holies" symbolizes the presence of Jehovah. The golden lid of the ark of the covenant was the "mercy seat," the throne from which God gave gifts and blessings to men. Into this most holy place the high priest went once a year—on the great day of atonement—and sprinkled the mercy seat with atoning blood, a type of the Lord Jesus who with his own blood entered into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us. In the Holy of Holies were the figures of the heavenly cherubim worshiping him who from his throne of mercy

bestows pardon upon sinners and gives gifts to men. Within the ark were the tablets of the holy law. "Of the law nothing less can be said than that it has its seat in the bosom of God." And there also was the memorial pot of manna,—for God's wonderful works of deliverance for his people will not be forgotten in Heaven.

THE ENTERING INTO THE LAND OF PROMISE

After forty years of wayward wilderness life the twelve tribes encamped by the Jordan over against Jericho. What is the symbolism of this crossing the Jordan and the final settlement in the land for which they had so long been hoping?

The Greek mythology represented hades as surrounded by a river which the shades of the dead must cross to reach their final abiding place. Bunyan pictures his pilgrims as passing through a river, the river of death, in order to reach the heavenly city. It is a common mistake that the Jordan is symbolically the river of death. This surely must be a misunderstanding. The Jordan was the dividing line between the wilderness and the land of promise and hope; it marks the transition from a life of mingled unbelief and disobedience to a life of victorious faith and rest. The good fight of faith was indeed still to go on, but it was to be a warfare of conquest and victory, and not of defeat.

The people passed through the Jordan—at its flood—as forty years before their fathers had escaped from the Egyptian army through the Red Sea. The people, led by the priests bearing the ark, marched down to the river ready to cross over. The river was rolling on, overflowing its banks and giving no token that crossing would be

possible that day, or ever. The feet of the priests touched the water, and, lo, this most wonderful thing happened,—the water of the river from above ceased to come down, and rose up as a heap far up the river, and the water below flowed away and left the channel of the river empty and bare, and the people marched through the river on dry ground. By faith they entered the longed-for country, no enemy opposing.

Before them stood the walled city of Jericho ready to defend itself or to dispute their entrance into the land of promise.

Joshua made preparations for taking the city, but in a way unheard of before for assaulting a city walled with stone and defended. He sent out a battalion of armed men led by seven priests with ramshorn trumpets and bearing the ark of the covenant. The men of war were charged to speak not a word, but the priests were to go sounding their trumpets. This battalion marched around the city, silently as to their voices, but with trumpets sounding—marched around it once—and returned to the camp. The next day they marched again around the city in the same manner and returned to their encampment. This they did for six days, with no token in the city that any man cared. On the seventh day Joshua led out his battalion early, and marched around the city again and again, seven times, the trumpets pealing out their challenge but all men silent, till at the end of the seventh circuit Joshua gave the signal command, "Shout now, for the Lord has given you the city." At this shout of victory the wall of Jericho fell outward and the city lay before them, defenceless.

In a like manner through faith in God Joshua was victorious over Ai, and over the five kings of the Amorites. By the power of faith the sun continued to shine on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Aijalon. The light of every setting sun is refracted toward the earth. By miracle the rays of the sun were refracted to shine on Gibeon all the night. By faith the tribes passed from a life of strain and war into victorious peace. As we read in the epistle to the Hebrews, "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God," and again, "We that believe enter into rest." And yet again, with profoundest meaning, we read, "Now he that has entered into rest" (that has become a sharer in God's eternal rest) "he also has ceased from his own work as God did from his." This is the commonly forgotten secret of the highest and deepest spiritual life, that victories and attainments are won, not by stress and strain, but by believing.

Along with these victories over their enemies the Lord showed the people that a life of victorious faith is not beyond the influence of temptation, and that transgression and sin separate a man from the power of God. The sin of Achan at the taking of Jericho, brought defeat and disaster to the army of Israel.

In closing this study of the wilderness life, let us recall what was said many pages back,—This history—from the call of Abraham to the peaceful possession of Canaan —was divinely shaped to be a revelation of God's way of dealing with individual souls; a drama showing the way of salvation; a solemn, silent drama extending through the generations. This could not be, if the history itself were not historic and inspired. This is one method of divine inspiration. Paul recognizes this method of divine teaching. (Gal. 4:24-26.)

COMMUNICATIONS TO ABRAHAM

When Aaron and Miriam complained against Moses the Lord said to them, "Hear now my words; if there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so. With him will I speak mouth to mouth." There were others besides Moses with whom the Lord spoke mouth to mouth, with an audible voice. It was so with Abraham. When Abraham was ninety years old the Lord appeared to him to make to him certain great promises and to establish a covenant with him. The Lord changed his name from Abram to Abraham, and Sarai's name to Sarah. "Abram fell on his face and *God talked with him.*" On this occasion God promised him a son who should be named Isaac. Again the Lord appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre. Abraham was sitting in his tent door in the heat of the day. He saw a little way off three men apparently travelers. He ran to meet them, and in oriental manner besought them to accept his hospitality. He and Sarah together made haste to prepare bread and meat for these stranger guests. Then the strangers inquired after Sarah and promised Abraham a son. When they went on their way—toward Sodom—Abraham walked with them a little way. As they walked the men made a revelation to Abraham by which he understood that they were heavenly messengers. The speaker of the three, the Lord, (the word is Jehovah) declared to Abraham that he was on his way to visit Sodom, to know its wickedness and to determine its doom. The two angels went on toward Sodom, but the Lord tarried a little, and Abraham made his wonderful supplication that Sodom might be spared for the

sake of the righteous men in it, in case even so few as ten good men were found there. In the light of this history we can see why Abraham should be called the "Friend of God." Jehovah, coming as a traveler, walked with Abraham as a companion, and talked with him in human speech, and in this manner made these revelations.

THE TWO ANGELS VISIT LOT

When the two angels left Abraham they went on toward Sodom. They came to Sodom as the sun was going down. As one of the "city fathers," Lot was sitting at the gate. When he saw the two strangers coming—men of presence—he rose up to meet them, and made a deep obeisance before them. As Abraham had done before, so did Lot; he begged them to accept his hospitality for the night. At first they refused Lot's invitation, and said, we will remain in the street. Lot would not consent at all to this and they went to Lot's house and he prepared them a supper. Then when the darkness came on, there was transacted that disgraceful show of the vileness of the men of Sodom; surely the cry of their wickedness which had gone up to heaven had not been magnified. Then the strangers made themselves known to Lot as what they were, angels from heaven. They said, "We will destroy this place, because the cry of the men of the city has become great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it." In the early morning the angels hastened Lot and his wife and his two unmarried daughters to bring them out of the city, that they might not perish in the destruction of the city. They lingered and hesitated—their dearest kindred and all their possessions were in the city—and the angels took

them by the hand to bring them out in haste, for the doom of Sodom could not wait,—but Lot's wife held back and perished.

Here again we see these heavenly messengers entering into the common relations, and speaking the common language of men, in a way not to terrify men with their heavenly brightness. These are examples of one way in which God has made his revelations to men.

In the morning Abraham made haste to the place where he had interceded for Sodom, a place from which he could look over the valley and plain where stood Sodom and Gomorrah,—and smoke was going up from that land as the smoke of a great furnace. God had rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM A REVELATION

In respect to the minds and characters of *men* it has become a proverb, that "actions speak louder than words." In respect also to God, the Creator, it surely must be true that what he has done is a revelation of his mind. According to the record God was the responsible doer in the destruction of Sodom. "The Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire *from the Lord* out of heaven." That destruction came on account of the wickedness of the inhabitants. If there had been even a few righteous men in the city the storm of fire would not have come. The destruction of Sodom was not an accident, nor a meaningless breaking out of natural forces. It was, in the first place, a declaration of the mind of God toward the wickedness to which the people of Sodom and

Gomorrah were especially addicted. What was their special wickedness and vice? Towards God they were idolaters, and in their social life they were addicted to adultery and nameless uncleanness. Their city has given a name to their unclean vice; they were Sodomites. Their swift destruction was a revelation of God's holiness—the revulsion of God's holiness toward such wickedness. And during all the ages since it has been speaking to men and declaring how much God abhors such corruption.

In the second place, this punishment of the Sodomites was a revelation of God's use of material agencies in the moral government of the world. Was this storm of fire a great miracle—a miracle never duplicated in the history of the world? In that case God sent his angels to administer supernaturally, for moral ends, the destructive agencies of this materieal world. Or was this shower of fire only a natural volcanic eruption which projected brimstone into the clouds to fall in fiery rain? If so God used the convulsion of nature to express his wrath toward man's sin. In any case the swift destruction of these cities, a destruction which God made known to his servants beforehand, a destruction so complete that their site cannot now be found, showed the working of God, and expressed his mind. This was a revelation for all the ages, and the world would do well, in these last days, to take good heed.

A REVELATION TO REBEKAH

This was a singular transaction, and did not seem on its face to be a great matter, but it made history and helped to shape nations.

Before Esau and Jacob were born Rebekah had a strange experience which she did not understand. She went to the Lord to inquire the meaning of it. The Lord answered, "Two nations are struggling within thee; the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." The history of Rebekah's twin sons showed the meaning of this declaration,—the birthright, that is, the line of descent by which the blessings promised to the posterity of Abraham, and to the world through them, should be given to Jacob, the younger son, and not to Esau, the elder. How was this answer given to Rebekah's prayer? Was it by vocal speech, or by an inward spiritual impression? The record does not tell; but however the answer came, Rebekah knew that it was from the Lord. It was the purpose of the Lord that the younger should have the precedence and the birthright.

With this note touching the method of this revelation we might leave this incident and give it no further attention. But the history of Jacob and Esau has been so much misunderstood, or misrepresented, that it seems well to consider it a little further. The deception practiced by Rebekah and Jacob did not take the birthright from Esau; God had *given* it to Jacob before the children were born. The birthright was not stolen from Esau. but he sold it, because he "despised" it; he counted it a thing of no value; he said, "What good will the birthright do me?" Esau was not an inexperienced youth, deceived and tricked into a sale of his privilege as the firstborn; he was a man of mature years; in these modern times he would be counted an old man, sixty to seventy five years of age; he had already married two Canaanite wives. There was no necessity upon him to

sell his birthright; he was not perishing of hunger; he was in his father's house and was his father's favorite son; he was full of physical vigor, a mighty hunter, strong and tough, just in from his hunting. He was hungry and impatient, that was all. And the great spiritual hope of his family was nothing to him.

The deception practiced by Rebekah and Jacob is not at all to be justified or excused, but it is easily explained; it was the token of their lack of faith in God's overruling providence. It seemed to them that the opportunity for the fulfilment of the divine purpose was slipping away, and that something must be done to meet the emergency. The same lack of faith in God to bring his promise to fulfillment was shown by Abraham and Sarah in respect to the birth of an heir to inherit the promises. If Rebekah and Jacob had left the matter with the Lord he would have brought his purpose to pass in some other and better way. It must also be said that Esau never had any rightful claim to the spiritual birthright; God's gift had created the birthright, and he had given it to Jacob. God's gift makes ownership. As to the inheritance of a double portion of the family wealth there is no record that Jacob ever received a camel or a goat from his father's estate. Jacob received that spiritual inheritance which he counted the greatest thing in the world and so he grew into the venerable saint and God became the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. On the other hand Esau lost that which he despised, and that which was never his.

JACOB'S DREAM-VISION

Their lack of trust in God and the consequent deception practiced by Rebekah and Jacob brought them

trouble for many years. This was God's testimony against their sin, but it did not invalidate his purpose that Jacob should hold the birthright. Esau was angry with a deadly hatred, and declared that he would kill Jacob. To get Jacob beyond the reach of Esau's hatred—under pretence of going to find a godly wife among their own kindred, a pretence which was also a solemn reality—Rebekah arranged with Isaac that Jacob should go to her brother Laban in Mesopotamia. Isaac gave Jacob his blessing and sent him away, and Jacob set out on foot and alone on that long and dreary journey. As Jacob plodded on his lonely way, he came—perhaps at the end of the third day—to that stony hilltop since known as Bethel. He lay down to sleep under the open sky with a stone for his pillow. As Jacob slept the Lord appeared to him in a dream-vision. Jacob seemed to see a ladder set up reaching from earth to heaven, with angels ascending and descending upon it, and the Lord standing above it. And the Lord declared himself to Jacob, "I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and of Isaac." And then the Lord renewed to Jacob all the promises which were included in the birthright. He promised that his posterity should possess the land on which he was sleeping; that his seed should become like the dust of the earth, and spread abroad, north and south, east and west; and that he and his seed should become a blessing to all the world. He promised also that he would be with him in all his journeying, and bring him again to his own country. Jacob was surprised and afraid; he had not expected such a manifestation of God in that lonely place. Then Jacob named the place Bethel—house of God—and promised the Lord that he would be faithful to him, and would dedicate

to him a tenth of all the riches that should ever come to him.

In this narrative we find a new manner of revelation —not by vocal speech as in Eden, or from the burning bush, or from the cloud and fire of Sinai; not by angel messengers; not by inward spiritual revealing without voice or token, but in his sleep the Lord made to Jacob a great revealing. In this vision of the night the Lord promised to Jacob all the blessings which he had before promised to Abraham. We shall find other cases where the Lord spoke to men after the manner of dreams. This agrees with what we read in Job; "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then openeth he the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." That this was not merely a natural dream of Jacob's uneasy sleep is manifest in that every word was fulfilled to him,—it was an outline history of the life of Jacob written beforehand.

DIVINE TOKENS IN ANSWER TO PRAYER

Let us turn back a little and note another manner of inspiration and revelation. Abraham was anxious that Isaac—whom the Lord had twice given to him—his heir and the heir of the promises—should take for his wife a woman in sympathy with the great hope of his family, and free from the idolatries of Canaan. He gave therefore to his trusted superintendent—a wise, godfearing man who was over all his possessions—a commission to go to Mesopotamia and choose for Isaac a wife from the kindred of his brother Nahor. This superintendent took a retinue of camels—enough to give a token of Abraham's rank and wealth—and journeyed to the city where Nahor

had lived and died. He came to the well where the shepherds watered their flocks. He expected there to find the shepherdesses, beautiful with the beauty of youth and health. Perhaps among them might be the one whom the Lord had appointed for Isaac. But how should he, a stranger, make so great a choice, a choice upon which so much depended, a choice which might shape the fortunes of peoples, countless as the sands of the sea, through whom all the nations should be blessed. He believed in the Lord God of his master Abraham; he believed that God ruled over the affairs of men; he believed that God took note of little things as well as the great; and he believed that God heard prayer and revealed his will to men. He made his camels kneel down by the well and waited; and while he waited he prayed,—"O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, 'Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink,' and she shall say, 'Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also,'—let this be the one thou hast appointed for thy servant, Isaac." Before he had finished his prayer, Rebekah, the granddaughter of Nahor came to the well. He made haste to go to meet her, and greeted her courteously, and said, "Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water out of thy pitcher." She answered, "Drink, my lord," and she quickly let down her pitcher from her shoulder upon her hand, that he might drink. And then she said, "I will draw water for thy camels also till they have done drinking." Abraham's servant looked on silently, wondering and noting every word, seeing how the Lord had answered his prayer and prospered his journey. Then he said, "Whose daughter

art thou, tell me I pray thee,—and is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?" She answered, "I am the granddaughter of Nahor, and we have room to receive you and plenty of feed for the camels." Then he bowed his head and thanked the Lord. And he gave to Rebekah an earring of gold and two heavy wristlets of gold. Rebekah ran to tell her mother's family and especially her brother Laban. When Laban heard her story and saw the golden jewels, he ran to give the man a welcome to his hospitality. This incident runs quickly to its close. Abraham's servant insisted that he should immediately—before eating bread—give an account of Abraham and his riches, and of his son Isaac who was to be his sole heir, and of the great purpose of his coming. He told them of his prayer at the well and of the Lord's answer, and he asked them to say at once whether they would give Rebekah to return with him to be Isaac's wife. Her father and her brother said, "This thing is entirely from the Lord; it is not for us to say either yes or no; let her go and be the wife of Isaac." Then Abraham's servant brought out jewels of silver and of gold and fine raiment and gave them to Rebekah, and valuable gifts to her mother and her brother. And then came the feasting. In the morning he startled the family by saying, "Send me away with Rebekah today." They said, "No, not so; let her stay with us, at the least, ten days." He said, "The Lord has prospered my journey; do not hold me." They said, "Rebekah herself must decide it." And Rebekah said, "I will go."

This prayer and its answer was more than an answer given to meet the anxious mind of Abraham's servant. It was also God's declaration touching the fulfilment of his promise to Abraham. That word, "In thee and in thy

seed," did not mean a mixed posterity, partly Abrahamic and partly Canaanite, partly godly and partly idolatrous. When Esau married his two Canaanite wives he put himself outside the divine promise. The divine election of Rebekah was made known by a divine token given in answer to a believing prayer. But back of that token was the Lord's control of Rebekah's thinking and feeling and speaking. And she herself did not know that her speaking had any important meaning. The Lord can touch the inward springs of thought and action without our consciousness. The inspiration of the Lord in Rebekah, without her consciousness, was revealing God's will and making history.

JACOB AND LABAN

Jacob journeyed patiently to Haran and Mesopotamia—from which Abraham and Lot emigrated—to the house of his uncle Laban. He came to the well where the shepherds watered their flocks, the well to which Abraham's servant had come long before, and there he met his cousin Rachel coming to water her sheep. He introduced himself to Rachel, gave her an affectionate greeting, and was welcomed to the house of his uncle.

The reader must now revise the common thought concerning Laban. Laban was a very old man. When Abraham's servant came to find a wife for Isaac, Laban was already the acting head of the family. Years passed before Jacob was born. When Jacob fled from Esau Isaac was already old and blind. The years had been passing and Laban had become old, perhaps a hundred and twenty years of age. We must estimate the plans and schemes of Laban towards Jacob as the thoughts of a man of the ripest years. His conduct towards Jacob showed his set-

tled character. And the story of Jacob's life with Laban shows the fulfillment of God's promises.

Jacob remained with Laban four weeks, and then his uncle said to him, "What wages shall I give you?" Jacob had come to love Rachel, and with a heart of good-feeling toward his uncle, and with utter forgetfulness of personal gain, he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel." In place of a dowry given to Rachel Laban made haste to accept seven years of service from Jacob. And then when the seven years were ended he deceived Jacob and gave him Leah, for whom he had never cared. Jacob had not wanted two wives,—but Laban required him to serve another seven years for Rachel. By the end of the fourteen years Jacob, and also his two wives, understood pretty well the real character of Laban.

Then Jacob said, "Send me away that I may return to my father." Laban begged Jacob to remain with him, for, he said, "I think the Lord has blessed me for your sake," and he asked Jacob to name the wages that should be paid him. Jacob yielded to Laban's persuasion, but he said, "You need not give me anything," and he named a proposal that seemed preposterous in its lack of wisdom. He said, "You need not give me anything; I will take for my wages a share in the increase of your flocks; I will take the speckled and spotted lambs of the goats"—the goats were normally black—and the brown lambs of the sheep—the sheep were normally white. Laban accepted the proposal, and proceeded straightaway to separate from his flock of goats all that were speckled or spotted, and from his sheep all the brown sheep, and drove them a three days' journey away, leaving in Jacob's care a flock of clear black goats and a flock of unmixed white sheep. The speckled and spotted and brown lambs

from these flocks of solid color were to be Jacob's wages. How could Jacob venture to make such a bargain? But whether he was wise or foolish in this dealing with Laban, the Lord's promise at Bethel began then to be fulfilled. The Lord showed to Jacob, in a dream-vision, the way to meet the selfishness of Laban,—a way which, it is believed, no shepherd ever tried before, and which no one since has found successful. The very unwisdom of Jacob's offer to Laban shows that his strange success was of the Lord. Speckled and spotted lambs began to be born, and these Jacob set by themselves, that the strain of mixed colors might be continued. The lambs of mixed colors multiplied, and the increase of Laban's flock was continually passing over to Jacob's flock.

What has this piece of Jacob's history to do with us, or what lesson does it have touching inspiration and revelation? It shows God's care over the secular interests of his chosen ones; it shows how he has revealed his will and wisdom in matters not spiritual; God had seen and noted the great wrong done to Jacob, and he restored to him the years which Laban had taken away. Here was a revelation, not to proclaim a great spiritual blessing to the world in the ages to come, but to show his elect servant how to meet an emergency in business affairs. And he has often done this for his servants. As toward Laban also, this was the Lord's doing, and he gave a token of this when he said to angry Laban, "Take heed to thyself that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad."

JACOB WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL

After six years of partnership with Laban their relationship became so strained that Jacob felt that the time had come for separation. And the Lord said to him,

"Return to the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee." How did the Lord say this? We do not know. But we can see the reason for the Lord's command to return to the land promised to his posterity. If Jacob had continued to grow rich in Mesopotamia, and had died there, his sons with all their interests would have belonged to that land, and the land of promise would have been to them only a name. His unpleasant relations with Laban made Jacob willing to leave Mesopotamia. Jacob consulted with Leah and Rachel, and they were willing to go. They said, "We are no longer treated as daughters, but as aliens. Our father has sold us and lived on the money. And all the wealth which God has taken from him has come to us and to our children. Do then that which God has said unto you." When this conclusion was reached Jacob made a quick and secret preparation for his going. With his family and flocks and herds and all his possessions he started for the land of Canaan without telling Laban. On the third day Laban learned that Jacob had fled. Then he followed Jacob in haste. After seven days he overtook Jacob. Then there followed at first a sharp contention, and after that a reconciliation and a covenant of goodwill and peace.

After his parting from Laban Jacob went on his way,—"and the angels of God met him." What did this mean? What communication did the angels make? What message did they brnig? The record says not a word and gives no token. Shall we call them guardian angels? Jacob must have felt as if tossed out alone into a world of strangers, and it must have been a great thing for him to know that God's angels were not far away. He could not know along what road the Lord would lead him in fulfilling the birthright promise, but

this was a wonderful assurance of the promise made at Bethel. Even if no word was spoken, this meeting with the angels was a wonderful revelation of God and of the unseen world, in the midst of which Jacob was always walking.

Jacob journeyed on toward the land of Seir where Esau was dwelling. He sent messengers ahead to salute Esau, in terms of oriental deference, and to notify him of his coming. The messengers returned and said, "Esau received your message, and he himself is coming to meet you with four hundred men. What did this mean,—his angry brother who had threatened his life, a wild hunter, coming with four hundred men; what could it mean but blood? Jacob was alarmed and exceedingly distressed. He must then have remembered the company of angels that met him a little while before. What could he do? If he were alone he might escape. He made haste and prepared for the worst. He divided his flocks and herds and their keepers into three divisions, so that if one company were attacked, another might possibly flee and escape. Then he prepared a great present for Esau, a present great enough of itself to make Esau rich,—two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats; two hundred ewes and twenty rams; thirty milch camels with their colts; forty cows and ten bulls; twenty she-asses and ten foals. He arranged for the keepers to drive these companies forward separately and make the presentation one by one, with great courtesy and deference. In the night he sent his wives and their children across a little river, to put them as much as possible out of danger. Jacob himself remained alone to pray, and through the long night he prayed to God. He said, "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which

saidst unto me, return unto thy country and to thy kindred and I will deal well with thee; I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies which thou hast shown unto thy servant. Deliver me, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him lest he will come and smite me and the mother and the children. And thou hast said, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." Then a strange thing happened, which nobody in the world fully understands—in the dark night a man came to Jacob and wrestled with him, and they wrestled together till the morning came. What does this wrestling mean? Did Jacob think that he was resisting an enemy who had come to do him injury? Jacob was holding to him instead of driving him away. The stranger touched Jacob's thigh and put it out of joint, and still Jacob held on. The break of day came, and the stranger said, "Let me go for the day breaketh." Jacob answered, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Jacob understood that the stranger was an angelic being able to give the blessing for which he was praying. Let us call this heavenly being the Jehovah-angel. He wrestled with Jacob as an athlete might wrestle with a little child. Jacob prayed in deep distress, feeling that his life and the lives of all that were most dear, depended upon the answer which he should gain. For Jacob it was a crisis of life or death. And the Jehovah-angel "blessed him there," and changed his name to Israel—Prince of God—for said he, as a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. After this night of prayer and final blessing Jacob was prepared to meet Esau, and Esau met Jacob with all the oriental courtesies of brotherly affection.

This revelation to Jacob was wonderful. Nothing like it ever happened before in the history of the world, and nothing like it since. Jehovah became the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of *Jacob*. And that night of wrestling with the angel has given a word to express earnest, pleading prayer—prayer in anguish of spirit; in distress and fear, men of faith wrestle with God.

REVELATIONS TO JOSEPH

Time passed on, and the Lord made other communications to Jacob—not new in substance and not new in manner. He sent him to Bethel where the Lord had appeared to him in the dream-vision of the ladder and the angels, and repeated the change of name and the great birthright promises. In preparation for the special worship at Bethel the Lord commanded him to put away from his family and his tribe all their teraphim—their household images—and their earrings which they counted as charms, or objects of worship.

Jacob came to Hebron and lived where his father and his grandfather had lived before him. Joseph, the son of Rachel, had become a well-grown boy of seventeen years. His father made him a special favorite—unwisely, though he deserved to be the favorite of everybody—and for this his brothers became jealous of him. Joseph reported to their father the bad conduct of his brothers, and for that they hated him. Then the Lord began to make communications to Joseph. Joseph dreamed that he and his brothers were binding sheaves in the field, and his sheaf rose up and stood upright, and their sheaves stood around and bowed down to his sheaf. His brothers understood the omen and hated him the more. He dreamed again and

told his dream. He said, "In my dream the sun and the moon and eleven stars made obeisance to me." His brothers saw the meaning and envied him. His father also saw it, and rebuked him for telling so preposterous a dream.

Why do we say that the Lord made communications to Joseph in these dreams? Why count them more than other wanderings of fancy while reason and judgment are sleeping? We count them divine communications because they were fulfilled in Joseph's after life, and because God continued to make such revelations to him. What was the good of these prophetic dreams? They were among the agencies by which God brought his purposes to pass; those dreams sent Joseph down into Egypt and saved Egypt from famine, and they brought the chosen family into Egypt, from which time their national history begins. Doubtless these dreams gave encouragement to Joseph while he was a slave and in prison.

Joseph was sold, a slave, into Egypt, but the Lord was with him. On a false accusation he was thrown into prison, but the Lord was with him. Two of Pharaoh's household officers were put into the same prison. They, both of them, had prophetic dreams, but the meaning of the dreams was a mystery. Again the Spirit of inspiration from the Lord came to Joseph. He interpreted the dreams, and his prophetic interpretations were quickly fulfilled. After a little time Pharaoh had his twofold dream, of the fat kine and the lean kine, and of the seven-headed stalk of wheat and of the thin and blasted stalk. Pharaoh was troubled by his strange dream, and Joseph was summoned from his prison to declare the meaning. Joseph's interpretation of the dream was a prophecy of the seven years of plenty followed by the

seven years of famine. This led to Joseph's appointment as Pharaoh's prime minister over all Egypt.

There is no record that angels appeared at any time to Joseph, or that voices came to him from the unseen, or that he saw visions of spiritual things. The revela tions made to him—in his boyhood and in his manhood—were by dreams or by inspiration to interpret dreams. His dreams and his interpretations did not concern small matters, but peoples and lands. It is certain that his dreams and interpretations were from the Lord, because the prophecies were true.

SAMUEL AND ELI

Samuel was one of the great prophets. The history of his birth shows the manner of the making of a man of God. Before his birth his mother, Hannah, dedicated him to the service of the Lord. As early in his childhood as he could do without his mother's care, she sent him to Eli, the high priest, to grow up in the atmosphere of the tabernacle, and to be trained in the tabernacle service. In the family of Eli her mother-love followed him with visits and motherly gifts. And the record says, "The child, Samuel, grew on and was in favor with the Lord and also with men."

This was a time of backsliding and formalism; the services of the tabernacle were maintained, but communications from the Lord were rare. One night after the aged Eli had retired to his rest, and the boy, Samuel, had gone to his bed, a voice came to the lad, calling him by name, Samuel. Samuel arose and ran to Eli, saying, "Here I am, for thou callest me." Eli answered, "I did not call; lie down again." Samuel lay down, and again

the call came, "Samuel." Again Samuel ran to Eli, saying, "Here I am, for thou didst call me." Eli answered again, "I did not call; lie down again." The third time came the voice of Samuel and the third time he ran to Eli, saying, "Here I am, for thou surely didst call me." Then it came to Eli that the Lord was speaking to the boy. Then he instructed Samuel what to do. He said, "Lie down, and if the voice come again answer and say, 'Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth.'" And the Lord called again, and Samuel answered. Then the Lord gave him a message, declaring judgments upon Eli and his family, because he did not train and govern his sons, but suffered them by their vices to bring shame upon the Lord's services. The Lord said I will do a thing in Israel at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle. When Samuel arose in the morning he dreaded to tell Eli, but Eli required him to tell every word. The prophecy was soon fulfilled. The two sons of Eli were both killed the same day in battle; the ark of God was captured by the enemy; and when the word came to Eli that his two sons were slain and that the ark of God was taken, the shock was so great that he fell backward from his seat and died;—and his daughter-in-law, the wife of his son, Phinehas, when she heard the awful calamities of the day, gave untimely birth to a son and died in sorrow.

This is the story of the first manifestation of God to Samuel,—not a dream as it was with Joseph, nor a vision as with Jacob, but a voice in the night, which Samuel supposed to be the voice of Eli calling from the adjoining chamber. The Lord continued to reveal himself to Samuel, so that as he grew to manhood "all Israel from Dan

even to Beersheba" knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

OTHER REVELATIONS TO SAMUEL

The great influence of Samuel as a prophet, made him a civil judge also, and he judged the people of Israel many years. When he became old the people began to ask who could ever be his successor. His sons were not like their father, and were not fit to succeed him. Then the people began to talk about a king, and they came to Samuel and said, "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations." This displeased Samuel, and he laid the matter before the Lord. The Lord said to Samuel, "Hearken to the people and do as they say, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me. But tell them and show them how the king will oppress them." Samuel reported to the people the answer of the Lord and gave them warning of the ways of kings in their ruling. But the people still said, "We will have a king to reign over us." And the Lord said, "Make them a king." How did the Lord say these things to Samuel?

The story of Saul's search for his father's asses that had strayed away, is interesting but too long to be told in full. Saul and his servant searched three days for the lost asses but could not find them. They came near to Samuel's place, and came to him to ask where they should look in order to find them. The Lord had told Samuel the day before that he would send to him the man whom he should anoint to be king. When Saul came the Lord said to Samuel, "This is the man that shall reign over my people." Samuel entertained Saul till morning, and when he dismissed him, he anointed him and kissed him,

and said, "Is it not because the Lord has anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" How did the Lord give these messages to Samuel.

Samuel called the people together to elect and to recognize their new king. The anointing had been a private matter between the Lord and Samuel and Saul. The manner of the election was by lot, and by the divine overruling the lot fell upon Saul. But when they enquired for Saul he could not be found. Then they asked of the Lord whether Saul would come to the assembly. The Lord answered, "He has hidden himself among the stuff." How did the Lord say this?

Years passed on and Saul won great victories, and became recklessly disobedient to God, and God rejected his dynasty from the kingship. Then the Lord sent Samuel to anoint a son of Jesse, of Bethlehem, to be Saul's successor. Samuel came and looked over the sons of Jesse. The eldest son came before him, and in admiration Samuel said to himself, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before me." But the Lord said, "Look not on his countenace, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

How did the Lord say this, and the many other things which he spoke to Samuel? Was it by an audible voice, as at Shiloh he spoke to Samuel in his boyhood? Doubtless the Lord spoke a voiceless message to the prophet's spirit—a voiceless message which certified itself to the prophet as the word of God. The prophets distinguished between their own thinking and the Lord's speaking. This must be held in mind in cases without

number. The Lord speaks a voiceless message and the prophet knows that it is the Lord's speaking.

GIDEON AND THE ANGEL

For a long time after the death of Joshua the people were under the guidance of prophets, and in times of special emergency the Lord raised up military leaders, who became their civil judges. These judges were not elected in any formal manner, but the Lord gave them the spirit and power of leadership and the people accepted them. The book of Judges illustrates many times the saying of Isaiah, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Again and again the people turned to idolatry and the Lord gave them up to their enemies; then they cried to the Lord for help, and he raised up a deliverer. This deliverer was a military captain, a reformer and a civil ruler. The history of Gideon shows the manner of the Lord's working.

The Midianites and Amalekites had come with their tents and camels—like grasshoppers for multitude—and were sweeping off the harvests and driving off the sheep and cattle, and leaving a famine behind. For fear of them the people hid in dens and caves. Then they cried unto the Lord and he sent a prophet to call them to repentance. This was the condition of things when the Lord called Gideon to be their deliverer. Gideon was the son of a well-to-do farmer. He was threshing wheat in a vineyard to hide it from the Midianites. An angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, "The Lord is with thee thou mighty man of valor." Gideon did not recognize the stranger as an angel, but the dignity of his address

impressed him, and he answered, "O my lord, if the Lord be with us, why has all this befallen us? Where are all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." The stranger did not answer this, but held to his great message and said, "Go in this thy might and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites; have not I sent thee?" Gideon was more impressed and said, "How shall such a man as I save Israel" And in oriental self-disparagement he said, "My family is poor and I am the least in my father's house." Still the stranger continued, not answering Gideon, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." Still Gideon did not recognize the angel as being more than a great prophet. He asked for some token to assure him of the reality of what the stranger-prophet had said,—and begged him to wait while he went and fetched a gift. The stranger waited. Gideon made haste to prepart a kid and unleavened cakes and broth of the meat, and brought them to his guest. The stranger said, "Lay the meat and the cakes upon this rock and pour the broth over them." Gideon did so, and the stranger touched them with his staff and fire rose up out of the rock and consumed them;—and the stranger vanished from sight. Then Gideon knew that his visitor was an angel of God. This reminds us of angel visitors of Abraham and their face to face conversations. But Gideon was afraid because he had seen an angel of God face to face. And the Lord said to him, "Peace be to thee; fear not; thou shalt not die." How did the Lord say this?

That night the Lord said to Gideon, "Throw down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the asherah that is by it; build an altar to the Lord and with the wood of the image offer on it your father's second bullock as a burnt sacrifice. Gideon could not do this by day, because of his father's family and because of the men of the city; therefore he took ten men of his servants and did it by night. In the morning the men of the city found the altar of Baal thrown down, the asherah cut down, an altar built to the Lord and a burnt sacrifice offered upon it. They asked one of another, "Who has done this thing?" and they soon found that Gideon, the son of Joash had done it. Then the men said to Joash, "Bring out your son that he may die; he has thrown down the altar of Baal and cut down the asherah." But Joash answered, "Will you plead for Baal and save Baal? Let him that will stand for Baal be the one to be put to death. If Baal be a god let him plead for himself."

The Midianites and the Amalekites were encamped in the valley of Jezreel. Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he sent messengers and a trumpet call through all the near tribes to summon the fighting men to meet him,—and they came. Then Gideon asked a sign from the Lord. Did he ask this sign for himself, or for the encouragement of others? He said to the Lord, "If thou wilt save Israel by my hand as thou hast said, I pray that thou wilt give me this sign; I will put a fleece of wool upon the threshing floor; if in the morning the fleece be full of dew and the ground all around be dry, I shall know that thou wilt save Israel." In the morning Gideon squeezed a bowlful of water from the fleece, but all the ground was dry. Gideon made bold to ask a like sign again. He said, "I will lay the fleece

out in the open again; let now the fleece be dry, but all the ground be wet with dew,"—and it was so. In this manner the God who rules over the earth and the sky gave Gideon the assurance of victory over the Midianites. This was a new manner of revelation, and it was never repeated.

Then the Lord proceeded to give a great lesson to Gideon—and not to Gideon only, but to all the world and to all generations of men—a lesson concerning the winning of victories in God's kingdom. In response to Gideon's call thirty-two thousand men volunteered for the war. Before them lay the valley of Jezreel filled with the Midianite and Amalekite army without number. But in the presence of this unnumbered army the Lord said to Gideon, "The men that are with you are too many for me to give you the victory, lest they boast and say, 'by our own might we have gotten the victory.'" And the Lord commanded Gideon to proclaim to his army, "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return home." And twenty-two thousand men went away. Again the Lord said, "The men are still too many. Bring the men down to the spring of Harod and I will test them there." Gideon marched the men down to the spring. And the Lord said, "The men who, as they pass along, scoop the water with the hand and throw it to their mouths, are the men that shall go with you, but the men who bow down upon their knees to drink, shall not go with you." Three hundred men scooped the water with their hands as they hastened by. By these three hundred men, the Lord said, "I will save you, and will give the Midianites into their hands."

How did the Lord say these things to Gideon?

A strange arrangement this seemed to be, to weaken Gideon's army until it ceased to be an army, in order to make victory possible. We are reminded of the word of the Lord to Zechariah, "Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord."

In this weakening of his force perhaps the Lord saw that Gideon needed some special encouragement,—at least the Lord gave an added token of coming victory. He said to Gideon, "Go down tonight to the Midianite encampment and hear what they say." In the dark night Gideon with his servant stole silently to the edge of the Midianite army, and listened to their talk. A man was telling a dream to his fellow; he said, "I dreamed that a cake of barley bread tumbled into the Midian camp and struck a tent and knocked it flat upon the ground." His fellow answered, "This means nothing else than the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash; for into his hand God has delivered Midian and all his host."

A strange manner of revelation was this—a dream in the sleep of a marauding soldier, and interpreted by another like soldier—but in this way the Lord sent his message of of encouragement to Gideon.

Gideon divided his three hundred men into three companies. Into every man's hand he put an earthen pitcher, and in the pitcher a lamp—making thus a dark lantern—and a trumpet in his right hand; with this equipment he sent them in the darkness and silence of the night to take their position on three sides of the Midian encampment. He commanded them, every man, to do as he should do. When he should blow his trumpet, they all were to blow their trumpets; then they should smash their pitchers together and let their lights shine out, and should shout with

a mighty shout, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." The men did so. With great rattle and crash they broke their pitchers; the lights flashed on all sides of the camp as if the camp were surrounded by a million men; the trumpets sounded peal on peal as for a charge to battle. The Midianites, awakened suddenly from their sleep, were in utter terror; a panic seized them; in the darkness every man thought the next man to be an enemy, and so they fought and slaughtered one another.

Let us notice the changing manner of the divine communications to Gideon. First an angel came to him and talked with him as a man talks with a man, and with the air of a prophet called him to the leadership of the army of Israel. Then the stranger revealed himself as an angel of God by the fire springing from the rock at the touch of his staff. Then the Lord spoke to him by a voiceless message, and again this was certified by the miracle of the dew. The Lord gave him the plan of attack upon the enemy—by a few and not by many. That was a wonderful message which God gave to Gideon, and to the world, "The men that are with thee are too many"; and there never was a time in the history of the world when this message was more needed than it is needed today.

THE BIRTH OF SAMSON

After the death of Abdon, the twelfth judge of Israel, the people did as they were wont to do, they turned away from the Lord, and he gave them into the power of the Philistines for forty years. After that, he raised up Samson to be their deliverer. Samson was a wayward kind of a man, but the Lord worked by him, and his birth was the occasion of a noted communication from the Lord.

Manoah, the father of Samson, had no child; his wife was barren. One day when his wife was alone a stranger appeared to her and said, "You now have no child, but you shall have a son who shall begin to save the people of Israel from the Philistines." He charged her to drink no wine or strong drink, to eat no unclean thing, and said that her son should be a Nazarite unto God from his birth. The woman went and told her husband. She said, "A man of God——that is, a prophet—came to me, and his face was so like the face of an angel that I was afraid to ask his name,"—and she repeated the promise and the charge of the stranger-prophet. Manoah prayed the Lord to send again the man of God and the Lord did so. The man of God gave to Manoah and his wife together the same promise and instruction which he had given to the woman before. Then Manoah begged the stranger to wait while he prepared a kid for him. The man of God said, "If I wait I will not eat of your bread; if you will make an offering, make it to the Lord." So Manoah offered a kid as a burnt-offering to the Lord upon a rock as an altar. Then the man of God behaved wondrously; as the altar-flame went up, he entered the flame and ascended to heaven. Then they knew that he was an angel of God.

The manner of this divine communication to Manoah and his wife was not new. The Lord sent his angel in the appearance of a man—with the countenance of a prophet, with the lofty and radiant look of a prophet who had long held communion with God and had been occupied with heavenly things. Then he certified his message by ascending heavenward in the altar flame. The man, Samson, whose birth was promised in this manner, was a strange and wayward kind of a man, a man who some-

times showed great faith in God notwithstanding his wilfullness—a man whose life might fittingly be introduced by marvels.

THE PSALMS AND INSPIRATION

So many of the Psalms were written by David that as a whole they are commonly spoken of as the psalms of David. The psalms were not communicated to the writers by angelic messages. Their few prophecies are Messianic. The psalms are a record and an unfolding of inward and spiritual experiences. The primary preparation of the writers for their writing was a profound and various experience of life, perhaps one might say, a universal experience. Divine providence and the Spirit of God ruled over their fortunes and lives so that their experiences and inward life might represent the experiences of all men. What possible experience did not David have—from his life as a shepherd boy, through his gradual introduction to army life and court life, the favorite of King Saul and then a fugitive from his jealousy and hatred, a king in the midst of court jealousies and intrigues, feeling the temptations of luxury and supreme authority, sinning grievously and repenting, heart-broken by family troubles and griefs, and in the end his hopes largely disappointed, but through it all fearing God and trusting in him—what conceivable experience did he not have. And the Spirit of inspiration guided David in the interpretation of this various life, not in the light of ungodly, worldy sentiment, but in the light of spiritual reality. What an experience prepared Moses for writing the ninetieth Psalm! What a life must have been behind the seventy-third Psalm! Notice some illustrations of the writing of the Psalms. In the first Psalm we have a contrast be-

tween the godly man and the ungodly, as seen by a man of faith who looks forward to the end. The second Psalm is an inspired sketch of the Christ and his reception by unbelieving men when he comes to establish his kingdom. The tenth Psalm is a picture of the utterly selfish man, scheming and plotting to cheat and rob men in trade, like a spider in his web, a wild beast sitting at the mouth of his den or stalking his prey—an inspired picture of the modern saloonist. The nineteenth Psalm parallels the works of God, in the earth and in the heavens, with the law of the Lord, as seen by one who has eyes to see and a heart to love wisdom and truth. In the twenty-second Psalm, with the pathos of a man who has gone through the deeps of sorrow, David sketches the sufferings and sorrows of the coming Messiah. In the fifty-first Psalm David opens his heart in his confession of his blood guiltiness for the murder of Uriah, and his prayer, with no excuses, for the pardon of his great sin. In this the Spirit of God has uncovered the soul of a truly penitent sinner. In the seventy-third Psalm the author tells of his trials of heart and of his weakness in envying ungodly rich men. It seemed to him that the Lord was giving to them all manner of happiness, while his own godly life was full of trials. He felt that a clean heart and a godly life had no reward. He was tempted to speak out his complaints against God's ways and doings. Then he went into the sanctuary of the Lord and learned to understand God's ways. When he saw the end of the wicked he became content. This is an inspired portrayal and interpretation of an experience through which unnumbered godly men have passed. The one hundred nineteenth Psalm, with its one hundred and seventy-six verses, has for the subject of every verse, save one, the

word of the Lord. Under every name which the language furnishes—thy word, thy law, thy commandments, thy statutes, thy precepts, thy judgments, thy testimonies, thy way, some praise or appreciation of the Holy Scriptures is given. This Psalm illustrates what is written in the first Psalm, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

How shall we understand the inspiration of the Psalms? The good providence of God brought the writers into all manner of life and religious experience; they had joy and sorrow, faith and fear, prosperity and trial, hope and disappointment, sin and repentance, the darkness of today and the triumphant hope of the days to come, and the Spirit of the Lord led them into an understanding of these phases of life, and guided them in the writing, for the instruction and comfort of all God's children who shall walk the same road.

THE CALL OF THE PROPHETS

The speaking of the Lord to the prophets is generally recorded in words like this,—"The word of the Lord that came unto Hosea"; "The Lord said to Hosea"; "The Lord said unto me"; "Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me"; or in some like language. How did these messages come to the prophets? Doubtless by a voiceless communication. The message certified itself to the mind of the prophet, and to the people it was certified by the character of the prophet, and by the character of the message, and by the fulfillment of the prophecy. But for some of the prophets their primal call, or as we might say, their commission, was of a different kind. To Isaiah was given a symbolic vision of the Lord. Remember the word, symbolic. If the reader forgets that

the vision was symbolic, he will be confused and mystified by the details. The description of this vision can hardly be made simpler than Isaiah's unchanged language. "In the year that King Uzziah died"—this was about 758 years before Christ—"I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and his flowing robe filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly." And one cried unto another and said, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.' Then I said, 'Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts'." Then one of the seraphim flew unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from the altar fire, and he laid it upon my lips, and said, 'This has touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I; send me.' Then the Lord gave to Isaiah a message of warning and of doom to the people of Israel.

In the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, King of Judah,—about 629 years before Christ—the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. The Lord said, "Before thou wast born I knew thee, and sanctified thee, and appointed thee a prophet to the nations." But Jeremiah said, "O Lord God, I cannot speak, for I am a child." The Lord answered, "Do not say, I am a child, for thou shalt go to all people to whom I shall send thee, and thou shalt speak whatever message I give thee. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee." Jeremiah

fulfilled this commission many years in the face of opposition, persecution and suffering.

About the year 599 before Christ the army of Nebuchadnezzar carried the young priest, Ezekiel, a captive to Babylon. Four or five years afterward the Lord gave to Ezekiel his special commission as a prophet. Ezekiel says, "I was in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar, and the hand of the Lord was upon me there. There came a whirlwind and a flame of fire wrapping itself together, with amber colored brightness surrounding it. Out of the flame came the likeness of four living creatures. Each one had four wings and four faces, the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox and the face of an eagle. The appearance of the living creatures was like fire, and they moved to and fro like flashes of lightning. And then appeared four wheels, a wheel for each living creature, wheels so high that they seemed dreadful, and wheels within the wheels. The wheels attended the living creatures and moved to and fro with them."

What was the meaning of these symbols? The Scriptures do not tell and nobody in the world knows. Above the living creatures and the wheels there appeared the likeness of a throne and of a man sitting thereon, and there was a radiant rainbow around it. When Ezekiel saw this symbol of the glory of the Lord, he fell upon his face and the voice of the Lord spoke to him. The Lord bade him stand upon his feet, and the Spirit of the Lord set him on his feet. Then the Lord gave him a message to the children of Israel—"a rebellious nation,' "impudent and stiff-hearted children," among whom he would go as among briars and thorns, and among whom he would dwell as among scorpions. A hand was sent to him

with the roll of a book written within and on the backside with lamentations, mourning and woe. And the Lord bade him eat the roll. (The prophet must first take the Lord's message into his own heart and soul.) Then the Lord reminded him that he was appointed a watchman to the house of Israel—both for the righteous and for the wicked—and that if he failed to give them warning, of him would their blood be required. Have the prophets of this generation laid to heart their responsibility for giving the Lord's warning to all men?

How did the Lord give their call and commission to these great prophets? By symbolic visions which revealed God, and by voices from the Lord which the prophets heard. They could not doubt that the Lord was sending them.

REVELATIONS TO DANIEL

Daniel may well be counted among the great prophets. Whether we consider the supernatural manifestations made to him, or the prophecies in which he outlined the history of the ages to the end of the world, or the wonderful way in which he stood for the "God of heaven" in the midst of idolatry, he must be counted among the very greatest.

Daniel was carried from Jerusalem a captive to Babylon in the time of Nebuchadnezzar's military campaigning before he came to the throne. The kingdom of Israel had been destroyed and had disappeared forever. In the beginning of Daniel's ministry the kingdom of Judah was also wiped out; there remained to represent Jehovah and his great promises to Abraham, and to keep alive the hope of the world, a few captives in a foreign land. Daniel and his three friends—trained for court service—stood for the

God of heaven in the midst of the splendid pageantry of the royal idolatry. To Daniel, so situated, God made such revelations as have made him a great stumbling block to unbelievers. The Lord makes the most wonderful manifestations of himself and of supernatural things in the times when they are most needed.

The beginning of God's revelations to Daniel came to pass in this manner. In the second year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar had a singular dream; when he awoke he could not remember the dream, but it greatly troubled him. He sent for his wise men, magicians and astrologers, and demanded that they should, first of all tell him his dream and then should explain its secret meaning. They could not do what the king required. They said to him, "You are demanding what no king ever before required of his wise men; you are demanding that which is impossible except for the gods whose dwelling is not with flesh." The king answered, "If you cannot do what I require, there is this one sentence for you, you shall be cut in pieces and your houses shall be made a dunghill." The word went out to the executioners to do their work. Daniel and his three friends were counted among the wise men, and the captain of the king's guard sought them in order to slay them with the rest. Daniel begged that he be not slain without knowing the reason why. Then Arioch, the captain, explained the matter. Daniel went to the king and asked that time be given him and promised that he would explain the dream. Then Daniel went to his friends and arranged that they all should pray that God would reveal the king's dream. In the night God showed to Daniel in a vision Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its meaning. Daniel thanked the Lord, and went to Arioch

and said, "Bring me in before the king, and I will explain his dream."

The king's dream was a vision which the Lord gave him, which had hidden in its meaning the outline history of the world. The king's dream was this,—he saw in his sleep the image of a man, an image great and terrible. The head of the image was of fine gold; the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As he was beholding the image there appeared a stone, cut out without hands, and it smote the image upon its feet and broke them in pieces, and then the entire image, the iron, the clay the brass, the silver and the gold, broken to pieces together, became like chaff, and the wind carried it away, but the stone, cut out without hands, which smote the image, became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Daniel explained the dream. He said to the king,—"This is the meaning of your dream-vision; you Nebuchadnezzar, are a king of kings; the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power and glory; you are the head of gold. After your kingdom there shall rise an inferior kingdom of silver, and a third kingdom of brass, and these also shall have rule over the world. After these there shall arise a fourth kingdom, strong as iron. This iron kingdom shall be divided as the feet and toes are divided, and like iron and clay, shall be partly strong and partly weak. In the days of these divided kingdoms the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms, and itself shall endure forever." This interpretation has been fulfilled down to the toes; the Babylonian kingdom, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, the Roman with its eastern and western divisions, and their many fragments. But it is not our

work now to study this fulfillment, but the manner of the revelation. To Nebuchadnezzar, an oriental despot and idolator, God gave a prophetic dream-vision, the meaning of which he was not to understand. In answer to the prayers of Daniel and his friends God gave to Daniel the meaning of the dream. On the face of it, God gave this revelation to save his faithful servants from impending death. It is plain, however, that the great divine purpose in the whole transaction—as to the king and as to Daniel—was to make known to the world the over-ruling providence of God over the ages, and the coming of God's own kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven. This revelation is the clock which marks off the passing years and times of the ages.

In saving Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego from the furnace heated to its utmost heat, the Lord showed to the idolatrous kingdom of Babylon that he alone, the "God of heaven," was the one living and true God. So did Jehovah, in the time of Moses, show himself to the idolatry of Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar did not at that time turn from the worship of his false gods, but he confessed that the God of heaven was the greatest among the gods, and issued a decree that no word should be spoken against the God of Heaven.

The Lord gave to Nebuchadnezzar another prophetic dream, a dream which portended calamity to the king himself. In his dream the king saw a tree, great and high, its top reached the sky and its branches spread over the world; its leaves were beautiful; its fruit fed all the beasts, and the birds made their home in its branches. As the king gazed upon the tree an angel came down from heaven and made proclamation,—"Cut down the tree; cut off the

branches; shake off the leaves; scatter the fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the birds from its branches. But leave the roots and the stump amid the tender grass, bound with bands of iron and brass." And then the language of the angel changed, as if the tree were a man; "Let his heart be changed from a man's heart, and let the heart of a beast be given him, and let this continue till seven times pass over him." This is the decree of the holy angels, in order that living men may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives the kingdom to whomsoever he will. Daniel was called to interpret the dream. When the meaning of the dream came to him, he stood for an hour in dumb amazement. The king bade him speak without fear. Then Daniel spoke,—"The dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation to thine enemies." The tree that reached to heaven represented the king himself. A strange madness should come upon him, (a madness which we call Lycanthropy) by which he should think himself a beast, and should go out and live with the cattle and feed on grass,—and that this should continue until he learned the lesson that the heavens do rule in the kingdom of men. The kingdom, however, should be kept for him and restored to him when he had learned to fear the God of Heaven.

This interpretation was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar. When his reason came again to him, he sent out a proclamation to all "people, nations and languages," rehearsing his dream and his experiences. This proclamation ended with this confession,—"At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his

kingdom is from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, 'What doest thou. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.' "

How did the Lord make this communication to Nebuchadnezzar and to his kingdom? To the king he gave the dream which seemed strange and wonderful. To Daniel, by a voiceless inspiration, he gave the meaning. And to the king, again, he gave the impulse to proclaim the dream and its fulfillment to all the nations.

When Daniel became an old man and apparently was no longer associated with the government, he was called upon to interpret another mystery. Belshazzar made a great feast to a thousand of his lords. In the midst of the revelry of the feast, there appeared the form of a man's hand, in the bright light of the great chandelier, writing upon the palace wall. The omen terrified Belshazzar. He called for the astrologers and soothsayers, but they could not read the writing. The queen-mother came in and said to the king, "There is a man in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods, whom Nebuchadnezzar named Belteshazzar and made master of the magicians,—he can read the writing." Daniel was sent for. The writing was in his own native tongue and he needed no inspiration to read it. Four words were written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN; numbered, numbered, weighed, divided. This was the translation. But what was the interpretation? What was the message of these four words

which the angel had written? This mystery of meaning the Spirit of the Lord revealed to Daniel. The writing was a message of doom to Belshazzar and his kingdom. This meaning Daniel gave to Belshazzar. MENE, God has numbered thy kingdom and finished it; TEKEL, thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting; UPHARSIN, the kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians. This sentence was instantly fulfilled; that night Belshazzar was slain and Darius, the Mede, took the kingdom.

DANIEL'S OWN VISIONS

The chief part of the book of Daniel consists of his own prophecies. These prophecies have some noteworthy characteristics. As to substance they are worldwide and agelong; they give in outline the history of the kingdoms till the God of Heaven shall set up his kingdom which shall never be destroyed. As to form and manner, they are, first, symbolic visions, and then, explanatory revelations made by visiting angels.

In his first vision Daniel seemed to be looking out upon the stormy sea; winds from the four quarters of heaven strove together; up from this raging sea came four great beasts. The first beast was like a lion, and had the wings of an eagle,—and then he stood upon his feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to him. The second beast was like a bear, and had three ribs in his mouth between his teeth. The third beast was like a leopard, and had four wings like the wings of a fowl, and had four heads. The fourth beast was exceedingly strong and terrible. This dreadful beast had ten horns. Among these came up another horn—a little horn at the first—and

plucked up three of the horns and took their places. This last horn had eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth that spoke great things. Then the vision changed and showed to Daniel thrones, and the ANCIENT OF DAYS sitting; his garment was white as snow and his hair like pure wool; his throne was like a fiery flame, and the wheels of it as burning fire. A fiery stream came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousands stood before him. The judgment was set and the books were opened. Then because of the little horn which had become great—because of the great words he had spoken against the Most High, and because of his wearing out the saints of the Most High, this terrible beast was slain and his body cast into the burning flame. Then again the vision changed, and one like the Son of Man was brought before the ANCIENT OF DAYS, and stood before him,—and to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all nations, people and languages should serve him—a dominion which shall not pass away, and a kingdom which shall not be destroyed.

This vision troubled the spirit of Daniel, and he came to an angel standing near, and begged him to explain its meaning. These four great beasts, the angel said, are four kings which shall arise out the earth, but the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever. Afterwards the angel gave a fuller interpretation, especially of the little horn that spoke great thing against the Most High.

What was the manner of this historic revelation to Daniel? A dream-vision in his sleep in which the successive kingdoms were represented by great beasts, and in

the same vision the interpretation by an angel,—and in all this Daniel knew that it was from the Lord.

Afterwards in the palace at Shushan Daniel had a second vision somewhat like the first. In this vision he saw a ram with two great horns, before whose might no other beast could stand. Then there came against him a he goat, with one notable horn, so swift that he did not touch the ground, and ran upon the ram in his fury, and broke his horns and stamped upon him. Then in the midst of his power his one great horn was broken, and in its place came up four horns. Daniel sought to know the meaning of the vision, and the angel Gabriel came to teach him.

With Daniel the years of his exile and the exile of his people, far from his native land, "moved slow." He understood from the prophecy of Jeremiah that Jerusalem should lie desolate seventy years. He therefore set his face to seek the Lord,—to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes, that he would return his people and restore Jerusalem. As he was speaking and praying, confessing his sin and the sin of his people, the angel, Gabriel, came again to him and talked with him. He told Daniel that after the restoration of Jerusalem, the time would yet be long to that greater thing, the coming of the Messiah, the Prince, who should make atonement for sin and bring in everlasting righteousness. This revelation made by the mighty angel, Gabriel, came in answer to much prayer and fasting.

By the side of the great river, Hiddekel, an angel from heaven appeared again to Daniel. Daniel had been mourning and fasting three full weeks. There appeared to him a man clothed in linen and his loins girded around

with fine gold; his body was like the beryl, his face was like lightning, his eyes like lamps of fire; his arms and feet were like polished brass, and his voice was like the voice of a multitude. The men that were with Daniel did not see the vision, but a great trembling seized them so that they fled and hid themselves. Daniel himself was overcome by the sight; in the presence of the splendor of the angel all his beauty seemed as corruption, and his strength went from him; he fell upon his face as in a deep sleep. A hand touched him and set him upon his hands and knees. Then the angel said, "O Daniel, greatly beloved, stand upright and understand the words that I speak to thee." Then Daniel stood trembling. The angel said, "From the first day that thou didst begin to chasten thyself before God thy prayer was heard, and I am come by reason of thy prayer." And then the angel gave a wonderful glimpse behind the veil of the unseen. He said, "The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days, and I remained there with the king of Persia till Michael, one of the chief princes came to help me. And now I am come to show thee what shall befall thy people in the latter days,—and the vision is for many days to come. Afterward I will return to fight with the prince of Persia, and there is no one that holdeth with me in these things but Michael, your prince."

The message of the angel to Daniel gave to him the outline of the history of his people to the time of the end, —till Michael, the great prince that stood for the children of his people, should stand up and there should be a time of trouble such as never was before and till many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.

Almost every manner of revelation is found in the prophetic ministry of Daniel, and the revealings which God gave to him are wonderful.

INSPIRATION AND REVELATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

God has revealed himself in nature,—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." David says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork"; and again, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou has ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him?" But the Old Testament and the New are alike chiefly occupied with SUPERNATURAL revelations of God. In the New Testament we have a continuation of the same manner of revelation as in the Old; messages given in dreams or by day; visions, visions of reality and symbolic visions; voiceless inspirations and voices from the heavens; appearances of angels and of glorified saints; but the greatest of all revelations was the birth and life and death and teaching of the SON OF GOD among men. Jesus, the Christ, was the greatest miracle of all ages—like every miracle, not contrary to nature, but not a product of nature. The New Testament is in completest harmony with the Old, but in the New the tree of revelation has grown to be broader and higher and more fruitful.

ZACHARIAS AND THE ANGEL

John the Baptist was a wonderful man. Jesus said of him, "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John, the

Baptist." (Mat. 11:11; Luke 7:28.) Zacharias, the father of John, was a priest. Both he and his wife, Elizabeth, were old, and they were childless. His turn came to offer incense in the temple. He went into the holy place where was the incense altar, and at the same time a great company outside were offering their prayers. In the holy place an angel appeared to him. The angel promised Zacharias that his aged wife should bear him a son, and commanded that this son be named John. The angel declared also what kind of a man this son should be. He said, "Thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his birth. Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Zacharias was like Sarah when the birth of Isaac was promised, the promise was so great that he could not realize its possibility, and he asked a sign to support his faith. With heavenly dignity the angel answered, "I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God," and he gave to Zacharias an unexpected sign—that on account of his unbelief he should be dumb till the promise should be fulfilled. And it was so.

The manner of this revelation takes us back to the angel visits recorded in the Old Testament. And when the son was born, Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied after the manner of the ancient prophets,—"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and

redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David."

MARY AND THE ANGEL

The same angel, Gabriel, that came to Zacharias, came afterwards to Mary, a maiden of Nazareth, a descendent of David, betrothed to a man named Joseph, who also was of David's line. The angel saluted Mary saying, "Hail, thou highly favored one; the Lord is with thee." Mary was troubled, for she did not understand what such a salutation could mean. The angel calmed her fear and said, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God." And then the angel declared to Mary that she should be the mother of a son whom she should name Jesus. Of this son the angel said, "He shall be great and shall be called the son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father, David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Still less did Mary understand this message, and she said to the angel, "How can this be for me, an unwedded maiden?" This question was not unbelief like that of Zacharias, but here was a mystery about which the angel felt that she had a right to ask. The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Mary accepted the great mystery and answered, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." Then the angel was seen no more. And from that day Gabriel has not been named as appearing among men.

By and by Mary came under suspicion. Joseph was sorely troubled in his mind. He was a just man and wished to observe the law. He loved Mary and was unwilling to bring upon her the capital penalty laid down for an unfaithful betrothed maiden. While he thought upon this matter in sad perplexity, an angel came to him in a dream and explained the mystery of Mary's condition. Then Joseph became the faithful guardian of Mary's fair name.

THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS

In order that Jesus, according to prophecy, might be born in Bethlehem, the providence of God brought Joseph and Mary to the city of David to be enrolled in their ancestral town. There Jesus was born and laid in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Shepherds were guarding their flocks by night, perhaps in the field where Ruth gleaned after the reapers of Boaz. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and the radiance of the Lord's presence shone around them. The shepherds were afraid, but the angel said, "Be not afraid, for I bring you good and joyful tidings, good tidings for all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." And then there appeared a great company of angels praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

We have here again a revelation by an angel messenger. It is more than this; here is an angelic celebration. The angels who had a part in this glory had something to remember and something to tell. What was the meaning of it all? There was joy in Heaven, and the

angels came to call men to share their joy. They came to declare that the child that was born, was the longed-for Messiah, Jehovah, the coming one. They proclaimed the fulfillment of the word of Gabriel to Mary, "He shall be called the Son of the Highest; that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Not to glorify infancy did the angelic host come, but to celebrate, that the Word that was with God, the Word that was God, was made flesh to dwell among men; that Christ, the Lord, was born a Savior for men; that the son of Mary was the Son of the Highest, the Son of the living God; this the great company of angels certified and celebrated.

A REVELATION IN THE SKY

Wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" We have seen his *star* in the east and have come to worship him. For what was this heavenly token given? Was it merely a finger pointing the way for these travelers across the barren wastes which they traversed in coming to Jerusalem? Who was this king of the Jews to whom the magi came to bring gifts? The son of David of whom the prophets had prophesied. And who was this son of David? He was the Christ, the Lord. And his star was the writing of God upon the heavens, declaring to the nations, declaring to the gentile nations, that Christ the Lord, was born. Was there ever another revelation like this?

ANGELIC COMMUNICATIONS TO JOSEPH

Forty days after the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary presented the child at the temple to make the offering appointed for the poor,—"a pair of turtle doves, or two

young pigeons." From Jerusalem they went to Nazareth, and from Nazareth—at some time before the coming of the wise men—they returned to Bethlehem. The wise men came to Jerusalem, and were bidden by Herod, the king, to go to Bethlehem and search out the new-born king and to bring him word. They found Joseph and Mary and presented their gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh,—gold for the king's treasury; frankincense for the worship of Christ, the Lord; myrrh for his embalming. Being warned of God not to return to Herod—(how was this warning given?)—the wise men returned to their own country by another way. Then the command of the angry king went out to slaughter all the young children of Bethlehem, in order that Jesus might not in any way escape. But an angel had already visited Joseph in a dream, and had bidden him take the child Jesus and the mother and flee into Egypt, and to remain there till he should bring him word. After a little while Herod died, and the angel came again to Joseph in a dream and bade him return to land of Israel. But when Joseph found Archelaus reigning in Judea,—a wicked son in the place of a wicked and cruel father—he was afraid to go there,—and again the word of the Lord came to him in a dream to go to Galilee. So Joseph and Mary came and lived in their old home in Nazareth.

Four times the Lord made communications to Joseph in dreams. We have no record that the Lord ever spoke to Joseph otherwise than in his sleep. Why was this? It is not for us to give the reason why,—but we can remember that this was the Lord's manner of revelation to Joseph—he sent angels to Joseph while Joseph slept.

REVELATIONS BY AND THROUGH CHRIST, THE LORD

We must hold in mind what manner of person was Jesus of Nazareth, Christ the Lord. Isaiah prophesied, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counseller, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6.) "In the beginning was the Word"—existing, not created—"and the Word was with God"—a companionship of equality—"and the Word was GOD." "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

Gabriel made brief visits to Daniel and gave to him the mould in which the history of the ages has been shaped. Gabriel came to Zacharias and announced the coming of him who should prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. This same mighty angel came to Mary to announce the coming of "the desire of all nations." These brief visits of the angel have done great things for the world and can never be forgotten. If these angel visits, so short that they must be measured, not by days or hours, but by minutes, have made so much history for the world, what should we expect when the divine Word, the Son of God, came to *dwell* among men and linked himself to the race of man forever. Without this all previous revelations would have been as nothing. All previous revelations were a preparation for this greatest revelation by and in Christ.

THE IDEAL OF PERFECT HUMANITY

The idea of a perfect humanity, the idea of moral and spiritual perfection, was lost to the world. The law of the Lord demanded perfection; thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself—perfect obedience with a heart untainted and untouched by sin; so the law in words told perfection,—but telling is not always revealing. For a fallen human race, dullness of spiritual understanding made something more than telling a necessity. Christ came to make, and to be a revelation; to live a perfect life and be a perfect man among men, that all men might see an example of perfect humanity, an illustration of a sinless life. For the boy in school the arithmetic gives not only the "rule," but also examples "worked out." Scientific study has its apparatus and laboratories to illustrate and apply principles. The life of Christ revealed to the world by a living example what is required by that law which is "holy, just and good," an example of perfect humanity.

CHRIST REVEALED THE FATHER

The existence of God, the Creator, is revealed in the works of creation. "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." (Rom. 1:29.) The beginnings of a revelation of God much broader than this were made in the Old Testament, but there yet remained much more to be revealed. Christ revealed God more fully, and revealed him not only by his teaching, but by being his living representative among men. "The Word was made flesh and

dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14.) "I am in the Father and the Father in me; the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, and the Father that dwelleth in me he doeth the works." (John 14:10.) "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18.) Does this mean that Christ gave to the eyes of men a vision of God? Not that at all, for he said to the Jews, "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." Is it possible to analyze the revelation which Christ made of the Father, so as to understand it, and hold it in mind? It is, perhaps, better to try to do this than not to try.

"God is love." The Lord Jesus represented this love. What is love? *Love is self-giving,* and *is measured by self-sacrifice."* God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but should have everlasting life." Christ represented this divine love. "The Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mat. 20:28) "In due time Christ died for the ungodly." "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Damon and Pythias—of Syracuse—were so strong friends that either one was ready to die for the other. That was wonderful friendship between friends. Christ gave himself for the men who hated and crucified him. "He that spared not his Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things." This is the love of God. God is love. In his sacrifice of himself the Lord Jesus represented this unspeakable love.

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," "for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 10:31; 12:29.) Is it possible that the self-sacrificing love of God and the consuming fire of his holiness should be represented by the one life of Christ? What is holiness? First of all holiness is perfect moral purity. In holiness there is no taint of impurity or uncleanness. Holiness loves purity with unspeakable love. But by as much as holiness loves purity and righteousness, by so much does it hate sin, uncleanness and unrighteousness. Purity and the love of purity, and the hatred of sin and uncleanness are the two sides of the one attribute of holiness. Toward all sin holiness is a consuming fire.

Love and holiness belong together. The sin-bearing of Christ is as much an expression of holiness as of love. John introduced the Lord Jesus as "the Lamb of God," the sin-bearer. Jesus said, "The Son of Man is come to give his life a ransom for many. He bore our sin in his own body on the cross. He suffered the just for the unjust." Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. In the garden the Lord Jesus prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me." The cup of suffering and death did not pass from him. Why? Because it was not possible. Why was it not possible that this cup of atoning suffering should be taken away? Because the holiness of God and his reprobation of sin must be expressed. As well might the love of God and his truth and righteousness be covered over and left unexpressed, as that his holiness and hatred of sin be left unexpressed. Christ's sinless life and untainted soul represented the holiness of the Father, and his suffering and death for our sin declared more strongly than words could declare

it, that holiness is a consuming fire. "The wrath of the Lamb" is the wrath of love and holiness.

The coming of Christ brought a new and fuller revealing of the three-ness in the existence of God—the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament tokens were given of the trinity in the divine nature. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The word, God, is, grammatically, in the plural number. "The *Spirit* of God moved on the face of the waters." God said, "Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." But the coming of Christ has plainly revealed the threefold manner of existence—or the three persons— in the oneness of the divine nature. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory." The Word is the revealer of God. When Jesus went away he introduced the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Helper. He said, "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you forever." "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." Whenever a believer is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, the trinity of the divine nature is declared anew.

THE WAY OF SALVATION REVEALED BY CHRIST

The way of salvation lies on the face of Holy Scripture from the beginning to the end. The need of salvation began with Adam's sin, and the way of salvation began to be revealed when Abel was taught to bring to God a sin-offering of the firstlings of his flock. The tabernacle cere-

monial showed the way almost in detail,—the great altar on which was made continual atonement for sin first met the sinner, and then the laver of cleansing, or regeneration. The apostles taught the way of life continually, and Christ gave his authority to the teaching of prophets and apostles. He revealed more fully all that the Old Testament began to teach.

The primary meaning of Christ's coming was interpreted by the prophet Isaiah before Christ came. "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The Lord Jesus declared the same thing concerning his coming, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Concerning his death, the shedding of his blood, Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day, for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." In this strongly figurative language Jesus declares that his blood was shed and his life given for the salvation of men.

Another condition in the way of salvation Jesus declared to Nicodemus; "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, ex-

cept a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." And Jesus added an explanation of his words; "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

A third essential thing in the way of salvation the Lord Jesus revealed,—faith in him, the Son of God. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my words and believeth on me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." This agrees with the last great word of Christ concerning the preaching of the gospel, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but that believeth not shall be condemned." So Jesus set forth the three necessities for the salvation of sinners,—atonement for sin made by the shedding of his blood, faith in him and the new birth by the power of the Holy Spirit.

CHRIST REVEALED THE LIFE TO COME AND THE RESURRECTION

It is almost true that the whole world believes in a life after death. The Old Testament recognizes that belief, and lays a sure foundation for that hope. God took Enoch to the heavenly life without the experience of death. Elijah had a more wonderful translation. By the will of God Moses died without sickness in the strength of his life, and his body was buried by angel hands. To make it sure that these servants of God did not pass into noth-

ingness and oblivion, Moses and Elijah returned and talked with Jesus, and were seen by the three apostles. King Saul showed the common belief in the life to come when he went to the witch of Endor to get advice from the spirit of Samuel. In a wonderful and picturesque parable Isaiah describes the coming of the king of Babylon to join the spirits of the mighty dead in Hades. "Hell from beneath is moved to meet thee at thy coming; it stir-eth up the dead for thee, all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, 'Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?'" "They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, 'Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms, that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof,' that opened not the house of his prisoners." Much might be written about the teaching of the Old Testament touching the life to come.

Christ did not teach the life to come as a new revelation, but he threw new light upon the old revelation. He brought life and immortality into the clear light. He gave to the Old Testament a deeper meaning than men had seen. The Sadducees—unbelievers in the existence of spirits—came to Jesus to debate their unbelief. He recalled to them the words of the Lord in their Scriptures, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," with this brief and simple comment, "God is not the God of the dead, but of living men." And the Sadducees were silent. To the penitent thief on the cross Jesus said, 'Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise,'"—a double promise, the promise of continued life and not oblivion, and the promise of immediate blissful life

with Christ. What is Paradise? Paul was caught up into the "third heaven, into Paradise"—not into the heaven of the clouds, not into the heaven of the stars, but into the heaven of God and the angels,—that is Paradise. To the church of Ephesus the glorified Christ sent this message, "To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Where does the tree of life grow? On the banks of the river of life. And where is the river of life? The river of life flows out from the throne of God and of the Lamb. From the agony of the cross the believing and saved thief went that day with Christ to the heavenly life.

. . . . .

(While the body of Jesus lay in the rock-cut tomb of Joseph, was not his spirit in Hades? No, by no means. Do not the Scriptures say, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades'? A wrong translation. In place of, 'Thou wilt not *leave my soul in Hades'*, read, Thou wilt not *abandon,* or *surrender up* my soul *unto* Hades. The preposition *eis,* before the accusative case does not signify *in,* but *into or unto.* The Greek *egkataleipein eis* is not to leave in, but to *surrender up unto.* The body of Christ did not see corruption, as says the Scripture, but rose from the tomb the morning of the third day—not more than thirty-six hours in the tomb—and his soul was in Paradise, as he himself declared.)

. . . . .

The resurrection of Christ himself was a declaration of the resurrection for all believers who live in him; they are in him and follow his fortunes; they die to sin with him, they rise from that death to a new life, and they rise from the grave with him. The resurrection of Jesus was an introduction to the general resurrection of believers

who "sleep in Jesus." "The earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many."

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING—THE PAROUSIA

Christ's first coming—born in Bethlehem—was a great event in the history of the world, but the world did not recognize its greatness. But Christ himself has declared that he will come again with a coming which the whole world will recognize. As his ministry drew near its end Jesus began to teach his disciples that he was to leave them; and then that he must be crucified by the Jews and rise from the dead; and last, that he would return to the Father, but after a long time would come again and take possession of his kingdom. He spoke a parable to teach this. He was going up with his disciples from Jericho to Jerusalem, and the disciples thought that the time for him to assume the kingdom had surely come. To teach them that there was to be still a period of waiting he spoke to them the parable which says,—"A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. And he called his ten servants and delivered unto them ten pounds, and said unto them, 'Occupy till I come.'" The meaning of this parable is not doubtful. Christ is the supreme nobleman of all the world, and if we measure distance by moral unlikeness, Heaven is a far country. Before his ascension Jesus appointed for his disciples the work which they should do for him in his absence. While the Lord Jesus is away, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, is administering the affairs of the kingdom.

At the last passover, in his farewell address he comforted his disciples with the assurance of his coming again. He said, "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I *will come again and receive you unto myself,* that where I am, there ye may be also."

When the time came for his ascension, Jesus led his apostles out to the Mount of Olives, and there promised them anew the gift of the Holy Spirit, and charged them with the work of preaching the gospel to all nations, and as he was pronouncing a blessing upon them, he was separated from them, and was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. As the apostles stood gazing up after their ascended Lord, two angels in white stood by them, and said unto them, "This same Jesus that is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven."

The Church of Christ—so many as "love his appearing"——are waiting for his coming. Jesus gave some tokens which should be, as it were, the midnight call, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh." He said, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the gentiles be fulfilled." "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken,—and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Another token also Jesus gave

of his coming. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations,—and then shall the end come."

With the Lord "a thousand years are as a day," but with the persecuted church the years are long and the ages move slowly, and to encourage his waiting servants the Lord Jesus sent from Heaven this one last word, "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give to every man as his work shall be." "Surely I come quickly." This is the last word of Holy Scripture,—Christ's own assurance of his soon coming. And in the name of the whole waiting church the apostle John answered back, "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

We do not say of the Lord Jesus that he was inspired, for in him dwelt all the fullness of the divine nature bodily. (Col. 2:9.)

THE INSPIRATION OF THE APOSTLES

Jesus taught his disciples, and especially his apostles, many things, numberless things. For three years, or more, he walked and talked with them. He instructed them in private, and they listened to his public preaching. He answered their questions and explained in private what they had not understood in his public teaching. He promised that when the Spirit of Truth should come, he, the Spirit of Truth, would lead them into all truth. (John 16:13.) The apostles went forth preaching many years before the gospels were written. The last of the gospels, the gospel by John, was written fifty years, perhaps, after Christ's ascension. John was an old man when he wrote,—and old men easily forget,—and no one of the evangelists was young at the time of his writing.

What assurance have we, what assurance can we have, that their records are right? The Lord gave them three promises; "The Spirit of Truth shall guide you into all truth"; "He will show you things to come"; "The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Thus we have the teaching of Christ rightly recorded, and supplemented by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

SALVATION FOR THE GENTILES

The prophets of the Old Testament understood that the Christ would be the Savior of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. Isaiah wrote in the name of the Lord concerning the Messiah, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth." But the Jews did not understand this. When the infant Jesus was brought to the temple the aged Simeon, led by the Spirit was there to receive him. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he should not die till he had seen the Lord's Christ. He took the child in his arms and said, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten *the Gentiles,* and the glory of thy people Israel." But the unbelieving Jews were blind to all this. Even the apostles, while Jesus was with them and while their ministry was limited to the people of Israel, did not appreciate the largeness of the Gospel. The first great lesson which the Spirit taught the apostles after

the ascension, and taught the whole church, was that the Gospel and the Spirit of God made no difference between Jew and Gentile. How did the Spirit reveal this?

After the martrydom of Stephen a great persecution arose in Jerusalem, the Christians were scattered and went everywhere, preaching Christ as they went; and some Greek-speaking believers went to Antioch and there preached to the Grecians, and a great number of the Grecians believed. News of this unexpected conversion of Gentiles went quickly back to Jerusalem, and the apostles sent Barnabas to Antioch to see the wonderful work that was being done. Barnabas came and gave a glad welcome to the Gentile converts. Then the apostles knew that the Gospel was for Greeks as well as Jews.

Philip, one of the seven apostolic helpers, went to Samaria and preached Christ. The Samaritans heard the preaching, and saw the miracles which Philip was working, and many of them believed. Then the angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which leads from Jerusalem to Gaza." On that road Philip fell in with the treasurer of Candace, ~~king~~ queen of the Ethiopians. This man was a believer in the prophets, and had been to Jerusalem to worship. Sitting in his chariot he was reading Isaiah, and just at this time was reading the fifty-third chapter. Philip introduced himself, and from that chapter as a text he preached the Gospel to the Ethiopian. The dark-skinned stranger believed, and was straightway baptized. This accomplished Philip's mission and the Spirit caught him away, and the Ethiopian went on his way to carry the Gospel into Ethiopia. Then Philip knew that the Gospel was for Samaritans and Ethiopians.

A Roman centurion, with his garrison of Roman soldiers, was stationed at Caeserea. Cornelius was a worshiper of God and faithful in prayer and generous in almsgiving. An angel of the Lord appeared to him and bade him send for the apostle Peter and receive instruction from him. At the time when the messengers of the centurion were coming, Peter, at Joppa, in the house of Simon, the tanner, was on the housetop praying. By a strange vision—a symbolic vision of unreality—the Lord showed to Peter that he was not to count the Gentiles unclean. Peter went with the messengers and preached Christ to Cornelius and his friends. As Peter preached, the Holy Spirit came upon that company, as upon the praying company of believers at Pentecost. Then Peter knew that the Gospel was for Romans, even for Roman soldiers, as well as for Jews.

By and by certain Jewish teachers—still in the dark—came to Antioch and preached that Gentile believers must be circumcised and become Jewish proselytes, and the church at Antioch appointed a committee to go to Jerusalem and lay the question before the apostles and the mother church. Before that council of apostles and elders Peter told his experience at Caesarea. Paul and Barnabas rehearsed the reception of the gospel by the Gentiles as they had seen it in foreign cities. Then James spoke, setting forth that the conversion of the Gentiles was nothing else than the fulfillment of prophecy; and he proposed as the judgment of the council that no ceremonial requirements be laid upon the Gentile converts, but that it be enjoined upon them that they keep themselves pure from idolatry and fornication—vices to which the Gentiles were very much addicted—and also that they abstain from eating blood, which was sacred for the making of atonement

for sin. They wrote a letter to the Gentile churches in this form, "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon the believing Gentiles no other burden than these necessary things."

This finished this great revelation and settled it forever that the gospel is for Jew and Gentile alike, with no requirement of any Jewish ceremonial as a condition of salvation, or of recognition in the church.

WHAT INSPIRATION DID FOR THE APOSTLES

What need had the apostles for special inspiration? The Lord Jesus himself had taught them; he had answered their questions and corrected their mistakes; for three years they had been under his instruction. And yet the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was an utmost necessity.

In the first place, there was need of divine inspiration to insure full and perfect remembering. The faculty of memory is a wonderful faculty of the mind, but it is greatly given to imperfection of operation. The inspiration of the Spirit was given to correct this imperfection. The Lord Jesus said, "The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and *bring all things to your remembrance,* whatsoever I have said unto you." This is our confidence that we have the true teaching of Christ.

When Jesus went away the conditions in which the apostles were living began speedily to change. When the gospel was preached and believers were multiplied, enemies sprang up and persecution began; questions between Jewish and Gentile Christians arose; false doctrines were preached; churches were to be organized and the duties of

officers and members were to be marked out; and there were questions of casuistry—difficult problems in conduct and doctrine—which must be solved. These difficulties could not be explained beforehand, for the difficulties themselves could not be understood until they had arisen. The promise of inspiration met this need also. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come he will lead you into all truth, and he will show you things to come." In the new needs and conditions, which they could not know beforehand, and which had never before existed in the world, the Spirit would guide them into all truth.

The memories of the apostles held naturally a great store of what they had seen and heard in the ministry of Christ. Not all of these things could be written, or if all were written, they could not all be read. A great cyclopedia is read only in brief items, here a little and there a little. The apostle John saw and felt this difficulty. At the end of his gospel he wrote, "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." This means that out of all that they had seen and heard in the works and teaching of Christ, the apostles must select that which should be written and placed on record for all the ages to come. And if that writing and record was to be the word of God to men, who could make the selection except the Spirit of the Lord? Inspiration was necessary to teach them what—out of all they knew—should be written. How did John make choice of what to write? He says, "Many other signs truly did Jesus which are not written in this book, but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." Moses had the

same need. His life was full of adventure, but only a little was written. Samuel and Isaiah and Jeremiah and Daniel were great men in public affairs, and their minds were full of history, but only a little was put on record. The spirit of the Lord guided them in order that their writing might be the word of God to men.

There were times when the apostles needed special help. They had not been educated in the schools. They had not been trained in the art and practice of public speaking. How was it possible that they should speak before courts and kings without fear and confusion? Jesus warned them of the stress that awaited them, but he promised the needed help. He said to them, "They will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues, and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Jesus said, "Take no thought *how* or *what* ye shall speak." The Spirit of God speaking in them would give them both thought and expression, both substance and form. So they were guarded against mistakes in language which would misrepresent the mind of the Lord.

THE GOSPEL REVEALED TO PAUL

The eleven apostles were taught directly by Christ. They saw his miracles and listened to his instruction. He lived his life in their presence. In memory he was always with them. And the Spirit of Truth was leading them into all truth. Not so with the apostle Paul. Paul was

easily the greatest apostle and the great teacher of the church. But he had never seen Christ in his earthly life. He did not see Jesus ascend from the mount of Olives. He began to preach straightway after his conversion, before he had seen any one of the other apostles. How did he come to know Christ and the Gospel? Paul himself answers this question. He says, "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me, is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Afterwards, in order that the other apostles might have confidence in him he went to Jerusalem and reported to them the Gospel which he was preaching. The apostles saw that he was preaching the same Gospel, and gave him the hand of fellowship, that he should go on with his preaching to the Gentiles. How was this revelation made to Paul? At Paul's conversion Jesus appeared to him in glory, and said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Then Paul knew that Jesus of Nazareth, whose followers he had been persecuting, was truly the Messiah, and had ascended to heaven, as the apostles were preaching. When Paul was baptized the Holy Spirit came upon him and taught him the way of salvation by repentance and faith in Christ and by the new birth by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of inspiration, by an unspoken revelation, taught Paul that which Jesus taught the apostles in his face to face ministry. Paul's vision of Christ at Damascus was repeated at Jerusalem, when the Lord denied Paul's request for a ministry in Jerusalem, and sent him far hence to the Gentiles. By a dream-vision the Lord called Paul from Asia Minor into Macedonia. By a vision the Lord gave him assurance of safety for all his vessel's crew when shipwreck stared them in the face. And by

inspiration of the Spirit the Lord solved for him many problems in his difficult ministry. Thus by every form of communication—by vision, by vocal speech, and by voiceless inspiration—the Lord made revelations to the great apostle.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE APOSTLE JOHN

The gospel by John is a striking fulfilment of the promise,—"and shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." John wrote especially the discourses of Jesus. He recorded the works of Jesus as far only as was needful to introduce the discourses. And those discourses had remained unwritten for half a century,—then the Spirit of inspiration brought them to remembrance that they might be written for the generations to come. The Spirit taught John what to write and how to write.

Two special elements in the inspiration of John ought to have our consideration. To him was made a revelation of the divine nature nowhere else put in didactic form. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The words are simple as if written for a child's primer, but the thought is too deep for full understanding by the mind of man. God is ONE; and God is the Father, and the Word, and the Holy Spirit. Who can understand this oneness and the threeness? Who can explain the relations of the Father, the

Word, and the Spirit? Who can distinguish well between the working of each in the creation, and in the salvation of men? And in many passages of John's writings, his mystery and his mysticism can be comprehended only so far as deep gracious experiences enable a man to understand.

The other special element in the writings of John is his mysterious prophesying—his history of the church and of the world—in symbolic visions. This book of Revelation is too great, too important, and too wonderful to be neglected,—but an interpretation entirely satisfacory has not yet been written. The world is waiting for a Daniel, or an angel, to tell the meaning. But there is one thing made sure,—in the long war between the church and the powers of wickedness, Christ and his church are victorious.

INSPIRATION WITHOUT COMPREHENSION

It is by no means necessary that a prophet understand his own prediction. Wise men, without inspiration, foresee the sure coming of some great events, the meaning of which they cannot discern. Isaiah wrote, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Is it possible that Isaiah understood how this could be true of the Messiah? The prophets knew that they had their limitations. Peter wrote, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who have prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." This diligent inquiry and search into the meaning of many a

prophecy the prophets have bequeathed unto us, and it is for us to continue to inquire and search till their fulfillment shall make their meaning sure.

VERBAL INSPIRATION

Some men give to this phrase—"verbal inspiration"—the meaning that the Holy Spirit dictated words to prophets and apostles, as a man dictates to his amanuensis; that the prophets were merely copyists of *words;* that their one duty was to obey the compositor's rule and "follow copy." We will say that—except in special cases—this is not a right understanding of inspiration. Nothing else so stirs mental activity as the indwelling Spirit of God. Nevertheless the inspiration of the prophets and apostles was a verbal inspiration.

Language is made up of words. The prophets all wrote, and must needs write, in words. If the Spirit of inspiration guided the prophets in the manner as well as the substance of their writing, then inspiration had to do with words—Jesus said to the apostles, "When they deliver you up, take no thought *how* or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaketh in you." This is inspiration, not only for substance of meaning, but for expression. Sometimes the essential meaning is made to depend upon the *form* of the word used. To Abraham the Lord said, "In thy *seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:28). Paul quotes this promise and says, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, 'And to *seeds,*' as of many, but as of one, 'And to thy *seed,*' which is Christ." Paul says that the form of the word—

the grammatical singular rather than the plural—was inspired. The critics say that Paul was wrong, but their inspiration does not seem to be from the Lord.

Why was the name, God, used in the Old Testament scriptures in the plural number; had this plural form no significance? Why did the Spirit, in revealing to John the mystery of the divine nature, give the name, Word? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Was not the significance of that name explained by this,—"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he hath declared him.*" What a careful discrimination of words is seen in this,—"If we believe that Jesus *died* and rose again, even so them also which *sleep* in Jesus will God bring with him." Jesus *died;* he was the sin-bearer under sin; the believer is not under sin, he *sleeps* in Jesus. Jesus said, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." When the prophet wrote words given him, which he himself did not understand, or words used with a meaning far beyond his possible understanding, it is sure that there was verbal inspiration.

THE HUMAN AND PERSONAL ELEMENT IN INSPIRATION

One common manner of argument against the full inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is to misrepresent and caricature the teaching of those who believe it. They are represented as teaching that the Spirit spoke to the prophets as a man speaks into a phonograph—a kind of mechanical operation from first to last. It is possible that such a notion may have been held and taught somewhere by somebody, for every possible form of absurdity has

been held,—but in the main they that oppose such a view are fighting a man of straw. If ever in the world there have been active minds, full of life and power, they were in the prophets and apostles; into their messages went their whole life and soul. The prophets were not dummies, or wooden men. They felt the power of their own messages. When Nebuchadnezzar told his dream to Daniel, and Daniel understood the meaning, that the great king whom he served was to be driven from his throne to live with oxen, he stood speechless for an hour, troubled and amazed. When Gabriel gave to Daniel the interpretation of his vision concerning the kingdoms of Persia and Greece, Daniel fainted and was sick some days. The word of the Lord was for Jeremiah "as fire shut up in his bones." When the Gospel came by inspiration to Paul it stirred him more mightily than he had been moved by his commission to persecute the Christians,—and for persecution he had been mad with rage. The Spirit of God did not breathe upon machines, but upon living men, upon men of thought, and that inbreathing quickened their thought to the utmost.

That the Spirit of inspiration did not so dominate the minds of the prophets as to paralyze their thought is manifest from the fact that every one has his own distinctive style of speaking and writing. There is no one certain style of inspired writing. Compare the style of John with that of Paul. John wrote in sentences short and simple. "In the beginning was the Word, . . . and the Word was with God, . . . and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God. . . . All things were made by him, . . . and without him was not anything made that was made. . . . In him was life, . . . and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness, . . . and the darkness comprehended it not." . . . With this compare the beginning of Paul's epistle to the church at Ephesus. Beginning with the third verse, twelve verses are one continuous sentence. Thought is added to thought; clause is linked with clause—by relative, or participle, or adverb, or adverbial phrase—till at the end of the sentence the reader has lost all understanding of its tortuous course, and of its beginning. Here and there we find parentheses of uncertain limits. Peter found some of the writings of Paul hard to be understood. II Peter 3:15, 16. Peter himself is intense, a medium between the simplicity of John and the complexity of Paul. Jude is briefly intense and abrupt in his style.

The Spirit of inspiration used prophets and apostles with their natural gifts, not stifling or paralyzing these gifts, but exalting and consecrating them. There is no natural gift—which is not evil—which God cannot use. It is nothing else than caricature to represent the fullness of inspiration as being mechanical.

INSPIRED RECORDS AND REPORTS NOT VERBATIM

The records which the different evangelists have given of the words of Christ are far from being verbatimly harmonious. What has this to do with inspiration? Is this a token that the writers of the gospels were not inspired? Let us consider this question.

The gospel by Matthew represents Christ as using, —with one exception — the phrase, "The kingdom of *Heaven.*" The other evangelists uniformly say, "The kingdom of God." What is the meaning of this differ-

ence? It means that Jesus used both terms with no difference of significance,—that either expression represents equally well his thought and habit of speech.

In recording the Lord's prayer, Matthew writes, "Forgive us our *debts*"; but Luke says, "Forgive us our *sins*." How came this difference? The two words, debts and sins, were used in the same sense, and both were *doubtless* in like common use among the apostles, and were equally authorized.

Much interest has been felt touching the inscription placed upon the cross. Matthew records it as, "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews." Mark records it as simply, "The king of the Jews." Luke says, "This is the king of the Jews." And John records it as "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews." No two records are alike. Count this the full inscription, This is Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. This full form includes every word used by any one of the evangelists. Matthew omits "of Nazareth"; Mark omits, "This is Jesus of Nazareth"; Luke omits three words, "Jesus of Nazareth"; and John does not write the two introductory words, "This is." Neither evangelist gives the inscription in its completness; neither one adds anything; neither one omits any word necessary for the meaning. The variety is better than absolute sameness.

In the record of Christ's great prophecy concerning his coming, there is much variety of expression. In Matthew we read,—"Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven;

and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

The record of Mark is shorter,—"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory."

In his record Luke has more variety of expression,—"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming, in a cloud, with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." It is plain that the evangelists are giving a digest of the great prophecy, rather than a verbatim report; but in substance of meaning they are in perfect harmony.

The commentators have found no little difficulty (with no good reason) in harmonizing the accounts given of the visits of the women and of the apostles to the tomb on the morning of the resurrection.

Matthew says,—"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher. And behold there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled

back the stone from the door and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said to the Women, 'Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him; lo, I have told you.' And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples Jesus met them, saying, 'All hail.' And they came and held him by the feet and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, 'Be not afraid; go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee and there shall they see me.' "

By the side of this put the history of that morning as given by Mark. "When the sabbath was past Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, 'Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?' And when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great. And entering into the sepulcher they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, 'Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; he is risen; he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before

you into Galilee; there shall ye see him as he said unto you.' And they went out quickly and fled from the sepulcher, for they trembled and were amazed; neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils; and she went and told them that had been with him as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, believed not."

As written by Luke the account is this,—"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. And they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments; and as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and must be crucified, and the third day rise again.' And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulcher, and told these things unto the eleven and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed unto them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter and ran unto the sepulcher, and stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." This seems like

the writing of one who was not himself a witness and actor in the events of which he wrote.

Last of all in the book and in the time of writing is the account of John,—"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher. Then she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him.' Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulcher. So they ran both together, and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher. And he stooping down, saw the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping; and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' She saith unto them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him.' And when she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, 'Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?' She, supposing him

to be the gardener, saith unto him, 'Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus saith unto her, 'Mary.' She turned herself and saith unto him, 'Rabboni,' which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, 'Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father, but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, and to my God and your God.' Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her."

What is the harmony of these four narratives?

1. An angel came and rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulcher and sat upon it. His face was like lightning, and at the sight of him the sentinel soldiers fell down as dead men. This was before the coming of the women. The soldiers recovered and went away.

2. The women came to the sepulcher, leaving their home soon after the break of day and arriving about sunrise. These women were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joanna, and others whose names are not given. They found the tomb open and empty. When Mary Magdalene saw this, she started back instantly in haste to tell the disciples. The other women remained at the tomb.

3. After the departure of Mary Magdalene the other women entered the tomb and had the vision of an angel who gave them a message to the disciples that Jesus had risen and would see them in Galilee. Then they went away in fear and haste.

4. When Mary Magdalene turned back from the sepulcher she ran in haste and notified Peter and John that the body of Jesus had been taken from the tomb and

carried she knew not where. Peter and John then ran in hot haste to the tomb, arriving after the departure of the women, and finding the tomb empty, they went away home.

5. On their way to carry to the disciples the angelic message of the resurrection, the women met Jesus himself, and he added his own message to that of the angel.

6. After notifying Peter and John, Mary Magdalene returned slowly and sadly to the sepulcher, arriving after Peter and John had been there and gone away. There she had the vision of the two angels in the tomb, and then Jesus showed himself to her, and gave her a message to the disciples. She then went to the disciples and reported that she had seen the Lord, and gave them his message.

Illustrations of such variations of narrative and of record, might be given without limit. What is to be said touching this lack of verbatim harmony?

It must be said, in the first place, that *verbatim* agreement between witnesses instantly awakens the suspicion of collusion and falsehood.

It must also be noted and remembered that differences of view are not contrary to truth. A front view photograph is no truer than a quarter view, or a profile, or a back view. Peter's confession of faith, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and Peter's denial of Christ, are alike true aspects of Peter's character.

These variations of testimony are the token that the Spirit of Inspiration used prophets and apostles as they were, with their various natural gifts, without recreating their gifts into sameness. Many variant gifts are better

than likeness of gifts. One great master architect, and many artizans with specialties of skill, are needed for building the great cathedral.

The apple tree bears apples; the orange tree produces oranges; and the vine brings forth grapes,—but there is one Creator of them all. In like manner "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

These diversities in the New Testament records do not disparage their truth, but they do indicate that it was not the intention of the Spirit of Inspiration to have verbatim agreement, or sameness of view. Is the Sermon on the Mount, as we have it, the full and complete discourse, or is it a careful digest made under the guidance of the Holy Spirit? Is the farewell address given at the close of the last supper, a word for word report, or is it a digest suited to be handed down to all generations, suited to be read and meditated upon, rather than to be heard once and to be heard no more? The greatest things in Christ's teaching are stated with exceeding brevity, as if for reading, and then for profound and patient thought. Jesus wrote nothing for the future; he left it for his disciples, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to give his teaching to the world, and to all the ages till the end of time.

One more point we ought to consider and remember,—this manner of diversified inspiration is not only true, but it is better, far better, than gospel histories in perfect verbal harmony. A ray of white light falls upon a prism and is analyzed into the splendors of the rainbow. The radiance of the sun falls in its oneness upon land and sea,

upon mountain and valley, upon crag and tree, and straightway the world is full of beauty, in all infinite diversity—not in one broad, uniform radiance of light, but in all possible combinations of light and color; so the light and truth as they are in Christ Jesus, fell upon the minds and souls of disciples, imbued and filled with the Spirit, and was given to the world as reflected from their appreciation and life experiences. The gospel of God, given in forms of thought and speech common to men, passing through the spirit-filled lives of many writers, is turned into a rainbow of truth. The Gospel becomes a diamond cut with many facets. It is as if Christ were re-incarnated in the lives of his inspired disciples, and with the touch and color of their life, gave his word of grace and truth to men.

WITHOUT INSPIRATION, WHAT?

If the Holy Scriptures be not fully inspired; if the history as written in the Scriptures be not true; if the revelation and the doctrine be merely the speculations and notions of men, what is left for the world? "If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?" If the supernaturalism of the Scriptures be not real, the argument for the existence of God is a drawn game. The Christian religion is given to the world as a historic religion. If the history on which it is founded be not real, our Christian faith is no more than one of the ethnic religions built on myths. The doctrines of the Christian faith are set forth in the Scriptures with the positiveness of mathematical truth. If there was no inspiration, we must count those doctrines as ancient fancies. Who was Jesus? Who was Mary of Nazareth, and *what* was Mary?

If Jesus was not the Son of God, he was the son of an unwedded mother; his father was unknown to the world, and his mother escaped with difficulty the death of a faithless betrothed maid. If Jesus was not the Lamb of God bearing the sin of men, what gospel is there in the world worth preaching to lost men? If Jesus did not rise from the dead, what then? Paul answers the question,—"Then our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain; ye are yet in your sins; then they also that have fallen asleep in Christ, have perished." And if Christ will never come again, what then? What is the hope of the world? The number of nominal Christians is supposed to be increasing; but the number of unbelievers is increasing ten times faster. Civilization does not regenerate men from the spirit of selfishness and savagery. If Christ be not to come again to finish his work, and if the finalities of man be not as revealed in the Scriptures, what remains for the human race, but in the lapse of the eternal ages, as the earth falls into decay, for the human race to become extinct along with the extinct Geologic races of the brutes? Then will that become true which is being taught as the last word of un-Christian Science,—"Man is the product of the universe and disintegrates back to the universe, and the greatest good of life is to get all possible enjoyment while living."

Label unbelief of the word of God with the name of "Science" and it does its work all the more surely.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps. 1:1:2, 3.)

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